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# A TRIDENT SCHOLAR PROJECT REPORT

NO. 185

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**CHARTING THE COURSE OF THE *VOYENNO-MORSKOY FLOT*:  
SOVIET NAVAL STRATEGY TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000**

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**UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**

**92-02846**



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U.S.N.A. - Trident Scholar project report; no. 185 (1991)

Charting the Course of the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot*:  
Soviet Naval Strategy Towards the Year 2000

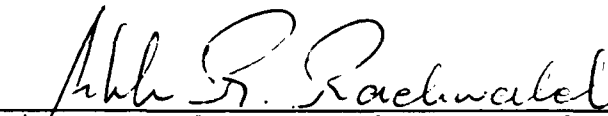
A Trident Scholar Project Report

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Accepted for Trident Scholar Committee

  
Chair

13 May 1991  
Date

Accession For	
NTIS CRA&I	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By	
Distribution /	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	



USNA-1531-2

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

OMB No 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 13 May 1991		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final 1990/91	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE CHARTING THE COURSE OF THE VOYENNO-MORSKOY FLOT: SOVIET NAVAL STRATEGY TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000				5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Stephen F. Murphy					
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER U.S.N.A. - TSPR; 185 (1991)	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Accepted by the U.S. Trident Scholar Committee.					
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT This document has been approved for public release; its distribution is UNLIMITED.				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) The Soviet Navy exists as an element of a complex system of Soviet national security policy. Economic stagnation, political polarization, and centrifugal national unrest forms the background surrounding the Soviet Navy. Gorbachev's perestroika reform program has brought fundamental changes to Soviet military doctrine, namely the requirements for "reasonable sufficiency" and a "defensive doctrine." The methodology used in this study involved a combination of predictive systematization and the basic methods of intelligence analysis. Research was conducted in four stages: all-source collection, evaluation, analysis, and prediction. This analysis determined that there is an enduring Soviet national interest in maritime power. So far, the Navy's warfighting capabilities have not been affected by economic constraints. The Soviet Navy of the year 2000 will be much smaller, but more technologically capable. This study predicts that it is structurally inconceivable that the Soviet Navy will transition to an exclusively defensive strategy under new doctrinal requirements.					
14. SUBJECT TERMS Soviet Union. Voenno-Morskoï Flot Naval strategy. Sea-power--Soviet Union				15. NUMBER OF PAGES 219	
				16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT		

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the implications of changes in Soviet military doctrine for the strategic employment of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000. President Gorbachev's perestroika reform program has brought fundamental changes to official Soviet military doctrine, namely the requirements for "reasonable sufficiency" and a "defensive doctrine." The former requirement calls for a reduction in the size of the Armed Forces, while the latter is intended to alter their character. Soviet naval expansion of the 1970s and early 1980s has been checked by the implementation of new doctrinal requirements. However, the degree to which the course of the Soviet Navy will change in the 1990s is unclear.

A systems approach is employed in this study to analyze the domestic and international factors that have impacted the Soviet Navy thus far and that will determine its strategy in the future. Economic stagnation, political polarization, and national unrest account for a new perception of Soviet national security. Under the banner of New Political Thinking, the Gorbachev leadership has sought a stable international environment through diplomacy unaccompanied by the aggressive naval presence of the Brezhnev era. So far, the Soviet Navy has managed to avoid major reductions in its budget that would degrade its warfighting potential. This has been done through the scrapping of obsolete vessels and a sharp reduction in out-of-area deployments. Current trends indicate that the Soviet Navy of the year 2000 will be a smaller, but more potent force because of expected technological improvements. This study compares the legacy of Admiral Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of the Soviet Navy from 1956 to 1985, to the strategic views of Admiral Chernavin, the current CINC. Soviet naval strategy in the 1990s will be influenced by Chernavin's greater emphasis on combat readiness and the integration of the Navy's missions with those of other services. Despite historic improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations, the Soviet perception of the U.S. naval threat has intensified in the absence of naval arms control agreements and focuses on the strike potential of sea-launched cruise missiles and aircraft carriers. The construction of large-deck aircraft carriers is addressed as a crucial factor in judging the direction of Soviet naval strategy. This analysis culminates in a projection of the vital and alternative missions of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000 and an evaluation of each mission according to the relative emphasis that the Soviets place on both offensive and defensive options. The central conclusion of this study is that it is structurally inconceivable that the Soviet Navy will transition to an exclusively defensive strategy under new doctrinal requirements.



I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.

Sir Winston Churchill  
Radio broadcast  
October 1, 1939

Americans must face a basic fact: Russia is a mammoth power that will not disappear or cease to challenge the United States, regardless of the colorations of its government. The contest for world influence between the United States and Russia is grounded in history - indeed it was foreseen by writers in Europe and America more than a century ago. Russia will continue to be guided by the pride, ambitions, and interests that have carried over from prerevolutionary times - and no mere alteration in regime or ideology will quickly eliminate them.

Robert V. Daniels  
*Russia: The Roots of Confrontation*  
1976

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

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I am very grateful to Professor Arthur R. Rachwald for his assistance, encouragement, and dialectical insights. He initially suggested this project and has become my mentor in trying to understand and emulate the Soviet military mindset.

Mr. Floyd D. Kennedy of the Center for Naval Analyses provided a steady stream of sources for this project and was instrumental in directing me to other experts in the field of Soviet analysis. The long-term perspective of this study can be attributed to the assistance of Dr. Theodore M. Neely and Captain William H.J. Manthorpe. I gratefully acknowledge the support of Norman Polmar who furnished me with the latest information on Soviet naval developments and was always available for further questions. Captain Douglas M. Norton, the Director of the Naval Academy's Division of U.S. and International Studies, offered encouragement throughout the course of my research. I also thank Dr. Edward L. Warner III of the RAND Corporation for his early guidance on the formulation of Soviet military doctrine.

From the outset of my research, reference librarian Mrs. Barbara Breeden assisted in carrying out a search strategy and often presented me with new sources that she had found. Mrs. Helga Brennan of the Naval Technical Intelligence Center was the key to obtaining translations of Soviet periodicals.

Mrs. Sandra Speaks and Assistant Professor P.L. Guth provided computer support for this project.

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## CHAPTER ONE

## The Soviet Navy and a New Perception of National Security

Over the past twenty years, the West has witnessed a surge in both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of Soviet naval power. Under the fatherly influence of Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy from 1956 to 1985, the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot* has grown out of its traditional coastal defense orientation and into its current status of a balanced power blue-water fleet capable of testing Western supremacy of the sea across the entire spectrum of naval warfare. Nominally, Soviet submarines maintain a three to one advantage over their U.S. counterparts and over the past ten years have become substantially quieter. The surface fleet has been emboldened by the addition of new multi-mission warships such as the Kirov class battlecruiser and the Western style aircraft carrier, the *Kuznetsov*. Soviet naval aviation now comprises more combat aircraft than the air forces of Britain, France, and Germany combined and is capable of disrupting critical sea lanes with long-range strike aircraft. Just a few short years ago these developments were reason to conclude that the Soviet Navy was headed for distant oceans propelled by an aggressive strategy. "Whatever its original rationale, the Soviet Navy's postwar expansion has created an offensive-oriented blue-water force," warned Secretary of the

Navy John F. Lehman in 1986.<sup>1</sup> This assessment, however, is in need of serious reconsideration given the current state of affairs in the Soviet Union.

President Gorbachev's programs of *perestroika* and *glasnost* for the political, economic, and social reform of Soviet life brought about fundamental changes in the perception of Soviet national security. This is an overarching development that will determine the character of future Soviet naval missions. The next few years are critical for the shape of the Soviet fleets and the refinement of the Navy's contribution to Soviet strategy of the year 2000. The Soviet Navy of the year 2000 will be the product of both the internal forces of *perestroika* and fundamental changes in Soviet foreign policy. While the future of *perestroika* hangs in a balance that deters even the Soviets from making predictions, it is both useful and necessary to examine the changes that have been made thus far and that are likely to endure. Soviet naval missions are being refined within the context of an evolving military doctrine based on the twin pillars of reasonable sufficiency and a defensive doctrine. The purpose of this study is to examine the implications of new doctrinal requirements for the strategic employment of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000.

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Lehman, preface, *Guide to the Soviet Navy*, by Norman Polmar (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1986).

## THE SOVIET MILITARY MINDSET

An essential first step in studying the course of Soviet naval strategy is to gain a basic understanding of the Soviet military mindset. A variety of influences combine to form an enduring Soviet/Russian strategic perspective that differs in many respects from that of the American military officer.

Geographical isolation, a factor that no amount of *perestroika* can change, limited Russian culture's contact with the West and East and resulted in a mild inferiority complex, a condition that has worsened since losing the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Geography also created a continental mindset oriented primarily towards land warfare. For this reason a strong navy is not regarded as a traditional element of the Soviet Armed Forces. When judging the ability of the Soviet Navy to safely navigate through the current period of reform it should be remembered that:

...the Navy is not the traditional Soviet-Russian military instrument of excellence, and is not the instrument to which Russian leaders turn first to resolve problems of national security...Russia does not have a very distinguished naval tradition, that is to say, a tradition of victory...Generally, Russia's naval history is a fairly sorry one.<sup>3</sup>

Along with geography, Russian and Soviet history have strongly influenced the character of the Soviet military mind.

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<sup>2</sup>See Robert G. Wesson, *The Soviet Russian State* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972) 10-11.

<sup>3</sup>Comments made by Colin S. Gray at a conference at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. in *The Maritime Strategy From the Kremlin's Point of View*, U.S. Naval Institute Professional Seminar Series (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1987) 5.

At one time or another, Russia has been at war with just about every other European power and in most every case this involved fighting on Russian or Soviet territory. Memories of the USS *Brooklyn* in Murmansk harbor and the landing of U.S. forces in Far Eastern Russia in 1918 have yet to fade from the military mindset. Neither have the 20 million lives lost during World War II. These experiences have created a "fortress mentality" and deep feelings of insecurity among the Soviet leadership.<sup>4</sup> The result has been a heavy reliance on military means and often aggressive behavior in order to maintain a buffer zone against attacks on Soviet territory or a stage for projecting power abroad, an element of the Soviet military mindset difficult to overcome in attempts to restructure the Armed Forces.

Lastly, Marxist-Leninist ideology has ingrained the Soviet military mind with a respect for theory and the lessons of history. Strategic thought is grounded in the Marxist-Leninist laws of war. These laws are held to be objective, based on scientific and natural principles; universal, applying to all wars throughout history; and enduring, part of the inevitable victory of socialism over capitalism.

The most basic and important law of war is that the nature and type of war depend on the political objectives of

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<sup>4</sup>William H.J. Manthorpe, "A Background for Understanding Soviet Strategy," in *The Sources of Soviet Naval Conduct*, eds. Philip S. Gillette and Willard C. Frank, Jr. (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990) 6.



the war. The course and outcome of a war depends on what the Soviets term the "correlation of forces," meaning the overall balance of military, political, economic, and technological capabilities between states or coalitions of states. Other laws of war involve the application of Marxism-Leninism's three social laws of dialectical materialism to issues of military development. They are as follows:

1. *Law of the Unity and Struggle of Opposites*: the struggle between offensive and defensive measures where new means of defense are created to overcome the offense, which in turn will cause the development of different means of offense.
2. *Law of the Transition from Quantitative to Qualitative Changes*: an increase in the numbers of a particular weapon system will, at a certain point, bring about a qualitative change in the methods of combat.
3. *Law of the Negation of the Negation*: an extension of the first two, this law states that the replacement of a certain method of combat or weapon system with a new and improved one will, in turn, itself be replaced as part of a progressively improving spiral of military development.<sup>5</sup>

Though in the early 1990s Marxist-Leninist ideology has been downgraded in Soviet society and stands to become irrelevant, the laws of war will continue to serve as the foundation for Soviet military thinking.<sup>6</sup> This is true not

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<sup>5</sup>Harriet F. and William F. Scott, *Soviet Military Doctrine: Continuity, Formulation, and Dissemination* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988) 132-135.

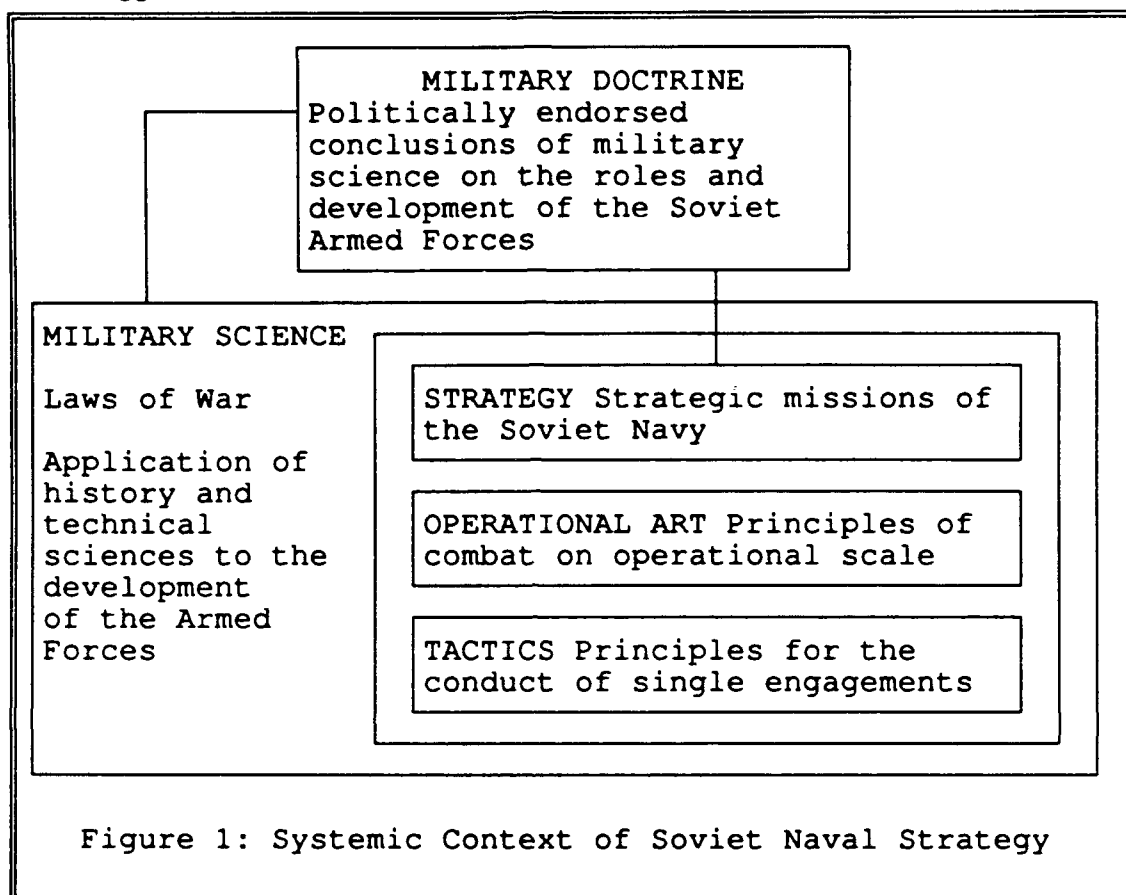
<sup>6</sup>Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, a leading Soviet naval theoretician, states that Marxist-Leninist teachings remain the "determining factor of the rightfulness and vitality of naval thought." in "From the History of the Development of Russian Naval Thought," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 8 (1985): 34, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

only because Soviet military leaders have been indoctrinated with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and know of no alternatives, but, more importantly, because it is a practical system of thought applicable to problems of military development whatever the political climate.

The Soviet military mind operates according to an organized and hierarchical system involving the interplay between military science, doctrine, art, and strategy. (See Figure 1, p. 12) Soviet military science seeks to apply the laws of war to answer the fundamental question: how should the Soviet Armed Forces be structured and employed in order to meet all possible threats to the security of the state? Consisting of historical and technical branches, it comprises a large body of knowledge concerning the nature of war and the range of methods that could be used by Soviet forces in combat. The concentration of forces at the decisive time and place is an example of a strategic principle originating from the laws of war and within the realm of military science. Other examples might be the history of surprise attacks, the factors that made them successful, and what technical means are now necessary to gain the advantage of surprise.

Military science is an academic discipline that does not necessarily represent the official government position. Much of the current debate in Soviet literature as to what should be the new roles and missions of the Armed Forces takes place within the realm of military science and, therefore, should

be carefully distinguished from declarations of doctrine or strategy.



Military doctrine represents the conclusions of military science adopted by the Communist Party and the Soviet government as a guide to action. It covers the general principles, methods, and objectives that are to guide the development of the Armed Forces and waging of war. Its purpose is to provide a unified framework for defense policy and the development of military strategy. Not existing in any one source, military doctrine must be inferred from the statements of Soviet political and military leaders.

The next level, military art, is more specific than the broad outlines of military doctrine. It is concerned with actual methods and forms of armed conflict and consists of three hierarchical disciplines: strategy, operational art, and tactics. A Soviet strategist views his discipline as:

The highest level of military art...[which] on the basis of the tenets of military doctrine, the experience of past wars, an analysis of the political, economic, and military conditions of the current situation... investigates on problems pertaining to the training of the Armed Forces as a whole and individual Services, and their strategic use in war; the forms and methods of conducting and directing war.<sup>7</sup>

Because of its unique operating environment, the Navy maintains a separate naval art or "theory of the Navy" as it is sometimes called. Though it exists as a semi-independent discipline, naval art is subject to the requirements of a unified military strategy.<sup>8</sup>

The roles and missions of the Soviet Navy are defined as part of a national unified military strategy. In the words of Admiral Gorshkov:

...we must be guided by such a very important demand of modern times as the unity of military science and the need for joint actions by branches of the Armed Forces in accomplishing missions during a war on the basis of uniform doctrine and strategy. The importance of this

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<sup>7</sup>*Soviet Troop Control* (New York: Brassey's 1982) 267, in *Soviet Naval Force Control: A Primer*, by Robert R. Liepelt (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 1989) 46.

<sup>8</sup>"The theory of the strategic employment of the Navy first and foremost follows from a unified military strategy and, as one of its sections, elaborates special questions on employing the Navy in strategic operations and in war as a whole." Rear Admiral T.S. Schlomin, "Military Science and the Navy," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 4 (1983): 25, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

approach rises especially in connection with an expansion in spheres of action of modern arms and the need to coordinate Army and Navy efforts strictly in accomplishing missions of our country's defense.<sup>9</sup>

This "combined arms" approach forms the cornerstone of Soviet strategic thinking and will exert a governing influence on the definition of the Navy's future missions.

In conclusion, the Soviet military mindset is the product of a continental tradition, an isolated Russian culture, a history of war on Soviet territory, and the intellectual remnants of Marxist-Leninist ideology. These are strong and enduring factors that no amount of reform can erase. The strategic direction of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000 will be swayed by traditional military thinking as military leaders attempt to implement new doctrinal requirements.

#### THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER

An understanding of the problems surrounding Soviet naval strategy requires a brief look at the domestic context of Soviet military power. Economic stagnation, political polarization, and centrifugal national unrest characterize the domestic situation in the Soviet Union.

There are inherent contradictions to a national security policy based solely on the maintenance of massive military power. Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer, in *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline*, asserted in 1986 that

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<sup>9</sup>Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, "Questions of the Theory of the Navy," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 7 (1983): 38.

the Soviet Union is undergoing a "crisis of the system" and made the following observation concerning its cause:

On the domestic scene, the Soviet paradox is expressed in the following dilemmas: first, military growth is one of the chief sources of the internal problems besetting the Soviet Union and makes more difficult their resolution; at the same time, military growth is regarded by the leadership as a supreme value to which the economy and society must be subordinated.<sup>10</sup>

Consistent with the Czarist tradition, the Soviets have in the past relied on the military as the primary means of ensuring the security of their empire and the internal stability of their political system. Since World War II, the maintenance of a large army and subsequent construction of the Strategic Rocket Forces was thought to be in the best interests of the state and its ruling elite, a necessary guarantee against threats to the homeland, the self-appointed vanguard of international communism, and the leadership of the Communist Party at home. Though not a traditional element of Russian and Soviet military power, the Navy has developed in response to the same requirements.

Successive military growth programs under Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, however, took their toll on the Soviet Union's overcentralized, lopsided, and technologically deficient economy by giving first priority in the allocation of resources to the Armed Forces. This seriously inhibited

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<sup>10</sup>Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* (New York: Knopf, 1986) 2. Edward Luttwak makes this same point in *Soviet Union 2000: Reform or Revolution?*, ed. Walter Laquer (New York: St. Martin's, 1990) 149.

the growth of the civilian sector and prevented the nation from keeping up with a rapidly changing world economy. Preparing to face an external threat paradoxically created an internal one, the now ruinous economic conditions plaguing the Soviet Union. Having fully realized this fact, President Gorbachev and his advisors redefined the requirements of Soviet national security placing the demands of political and economic reform above those of global military involvement. This represents a fundamentally *new perception of national security* that will serve as the basis for the future strategic employment of the Soviet Navy.

The current political situation in the Soviet Union has become polarized after initial attempts at gradual democratization. There have been serious challenges to the Communist Party's authority and an even more serious backlash by Party conservatives clinging to power. In *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, Zbigniew Brzezinski puts this process in perspective with his thesis that communism as a viable system of government is in a "terminal crisis" that will render it "irrelevant" by the end of the century.<sup>11</sup> Whatever the future of the Communist rule, replacement or resurgence, the outcome will have far-reaching implications for the nature of

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<sup>11</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Scribner, 1989) 12. See also Walter Laquer, "Soviet Politics: Future Scenarios" in Laquer, 38-83.

the Soviet military threat. More relevant to this study is that political instability defines the environment in which decisions about the future of the Soviet Navy will be made.

National unrest threatens to alter the very conception of what Soviet strategists hold as their number one priority: the "defense of the homeland." All but one of the Soviet Union's fifteen republics have declared their sovereignty, hinting that secession from the Union is imminent. After President Gorbachev's national referendum in March 1991, six republics had announced their intention to become independent states.<sup>12</sup> While the future configuration of the Soviet Union is unclear, there is one scenario that seems more likely than most.<sup>13</sup> That is the total disintegration of the multinational Soviet system and emergence of a Soviet/Russian state comprising the republics of Russia, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia. Relations with former republics would either be completely dissolved or exist within some type of loose confederation. The national security requirements of a Soviet/Russian state are expected to be defined more in terms of Russian tradition than Soviet ideology because of the inimical relationship between Marxism-

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<sup>12</sup>Francis X. Clines, "Soviets Say Result of Ballot Is a Mandate for Gorbachev," *The New York Times* 20 March 1991: A7. In addition to the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, Georgia, Armenia, and Moldavia have announced plans to secede.

<sup>13</sup>At a Fall 1990 Center for Naval Analyses symposium there was a consensus among Soviet representatives on the right and left that the Soviet empire will eventually be reduced to a Russian state. Floyd D. Kennedy, Scientific Analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, personal interview, 4 January 1991.



Leninism and true Russian culture. This has several implications for military strategy.

Tradition offers two different perspectives on the projected military strategy of a Soviet/Russian state. The Russian language has two different words to identify Russia: *Rossiya*, the imperial, expansionist Russia; and *Rus'*, the traditional and self-centered Russia.<sup>14</sup> The first term suggests a more potent and aggressive military built to support an imperial foreign policy. A large oceangoing navy would be perceived as essential to furthering state interests. Communist ideology catered to this strain of culture with messianic visions of Russia as a superpower. Since Marxist-Leninist ideology has been rejected by the majority of Russian citizens and the Soviet Union has become a crippled superpower, imperial ambitions are an unlikely influence upon at least the near-term national security policy of a Soviet/Russian state.

Instead, what may happen is that the national security policy will come under the influence of the *Rus'* tradition and develop according to strictly defensive requirements. Ground forces would take precedence over a modestly sized navy charged mainly with coastal defense. This distinction is

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<sup>14</sup>Seweryn Bialer, "Russia vs. the Soviet Union," *U.S. News and World Report*, 5 November 1990: 46. Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks, Director of Naval Intelligence, has cited the possibility of a "resurgence of Russian nationalism." Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, U.S. Navy, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on intelligence issues, 14 March 1990, 5.

significant in terms of its long-term impact on the roles and missions of the Soviet Navy.

#### NEW POLITICAL THINKING ON SECURITY

In the name of *Noviya Politicheskaya Myshleniya* or New Political Thinking, the Soviets have made fundamental changes in the way they go about ensuring national security. The motivation for this change becomes apparent when evaluating the world through Soviet eyes, in terms of the correlation of forces. By 1985, the Soviet leadership had come to the realization that the correlation of forces had shifted markedly to their disadvantage. At home, the aforementioned Soviet economy struggled to keep up with the rest of the industrialized world. Abroad, Soviet clients required large amounts of aid and some turned to the West for assistance when the socialist model proved ineffective. Newly industrialized nations prospered within the capitalist system and the international political scene shifted towards democracy. The United States had recovered from Watergate and its post-Vietnam malaise to challenge the Soviets with a military build-up and an activist policy of countering communist influence in such places as Nicaragua and Afghanistan. In addition, the Soviets found themselves lagging behind in high technology, a position that made it even more difficult for

them to compete economically and militarily.<sup>15</sup> This shift in the correlation of forces made it painfully clear to the Gorbachev leadership that fundamental changes in foreign policy objectives were desperately needed in order to reverse these trends and maintain the Soviet Union's status as a global power. Their solution was "New Political Thinking."

In order to examine possible changes in the strategic employment of the Soviet Navy that could come as a result of New Political Thinking it is useful to address three questions. First, what are the basic principles of New Political Thinking? Secondly, who is responsible for its development? Third, what changes has it brought to Soviet military doctrine?

Lenin once remarked in the Clausewitzian tradition, "War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them."<sup>16</sup> Gorbachev, however, disagrees, arguing that Clausewitz's axiom is "obsolete" and should be relegated to "the library shelves."<sup>17</sup> This distinction represents a fundamental reorientation of Soviet national security policy and goes a long way to answering the first question.

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<sup>15</sup>This point has become even more apparent during the Persian Gulf War where Soviet built Scud missiles fired by Iraq either were shot down or ended up at great distances from their intended targets.

<sup>16</sup>V.I. Lenin, "War and Revolution," in *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) 400.

<sup>17</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika* (New York: Scribner, 1988) 127.

Soviet leaders often describe New Political Thinking in terms of three basic principles.<sup>18</sup> The first is that political means should take precedence over intimidation and the use of military force. Speaking at the 27th Party Congress in 1986, President Gorbachev declared that "the character of contemporary weapons does not permit any state hope of defending itself by military-technical means alone, even by creating the most powerful defense." Instead, "ensuring security becomes more and more a political task and can only be solved by political means."<sup>19</sup> New Political Thinking views diplomacy as a more effective and less expensive alternative to Marxist-Leninist ideology and military force.

The second principle is that security is "universal" and should account for the national security concerns of other nations as well as the Soviet Union. In the past, the military ensured Soviet security by making its neighbors feel insecure. The Soviets armed for objective security that required superiority in the correlation of military forces. Gorbachev has apparently instituted the opposite requirement,

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<sup>18</sup> M.S. Gorbachev, *Political Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 27th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, trans. in *M.S. Gorbachev: Speeches and Writings* (New York: Pergamon, 1986) 70-72; D.T. Yazov, speech at the 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, 3 July 1990, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-129-S, 5 July 1990, 21-22. Yazov is Minister of Defense and a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee.

<sup>19</sup> M.S. Gorbachev, *Political Report* 71.

that provisions for the security of other nations must be incorporated into Soviet military doctrine. According to Sovietologist Stephen Meyer, this shift towards mutual security has its origins in new global interdependence and the recognition of common threats to mankind.<sup>20</sup> In practice, this development will place constraints on the military and encourage the creation of forces that both promote mutual security and maintain a credible deterrent. This concept is embodied in the requirement for a "defensive doctrine."

Lastly, New Political Thinking calls for large reductions in Soviet and U.S. nuclear arsenals and places strict limitations on the level of Soviet conventional forces. The Soviets call this the requirement for "reasonable sufficiency." Aside from its obvious economic origins, this aspect of New Political Thinking also has an equally valid practical military justification based on the realization by Soviet political and military leaders that nuclear war, at least a full-scale exchange, could not be won. This was the result of a process in Soviet military thought questioning the utility of nuclear weapons.

Briefly, official Soviet views on the nature of war can be attributed to three doctrinal periods. During the 1960s, war was thought to be inevitable, short, nuclear from the outset, and worldwide. This was modified during the 1970s

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<sup>20</sup>Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security*, 13.2 (1988): 127.

when the concept of escalation started the Soviets thinking about limited nuclear warfighting both in terms of its destructive power and geographical scope. The primary objective at this time was to seize control of the European mainland without causing an intercontinental nuclear exchange.

Serious reconsideration of previous doctrine during the early 1980s brought about a sea-change in the official Soviet views on the nature of war. The nuclear option was downgraded in favor of plans to fight a protracted conventional conflict.<sup>21</sup> One of the early indications of this came in a speech by Leonid Brezhnev at the 26th Party Congress in 1981 with the statement that "to expect victory in nuclear war is dangerous insanity."<sup>22</sup> In the words of Marshal N.K. Ogarkov, Chief of the General Staff from 1977 to 1985:

The rapid increase in the numbers of nuclear weapons, development of long range and highly accurate delivery to targets, and their widespread distribution...led to a basic review of the role of this weapon.<sup>23</sup>

The development of nuclear weapons occasioned what the Soviets call the "revolution in military affairs" with profound

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<sup>21</sup>James M. McConnell, "The Soviet Naval Mission Structure: Past, Present, and Future," in *The Soviet and Other Communist Navies: The View From the Mid-1980s*, ed. James L. George (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1986) 49, 53-54.

<sup>22</sup>"Report of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, L.I. Brezhnev," *Pravda* 24 February 1981: 4, in *The Soviet Shift in Emphasis from Nuclear to Conventional*, vol. 1, by James M. McConnell (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, June 1983) 21.

<sup>23</sup>N.K. Ogarkov, *Istoriya Uchit B'ditelnost* [History Teaches Vigilance], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985) 51-54, in Daniel Goure, "A New Soviet National Security Policy for the 21st Century," *Strategic Review*, 17 (1989): 38.

ramifications for strategy. The Soviets now believe that this process has run its course. Chief of the General Staff General M.A. Moiseyev comments:

We have now essentially embarked on a new stage in the building of the armed forces. The previous stage, which we linked with the revolution in military affairs and the massive introduction of missile weapons, must be considered completed.<sup>24</sup>

The military is looking into advanced conventional munitions that, in some cases, offer the same destructive power as nuclear weapons, but without the lasting effects of radiation which Soviets citizens are currently experiencing as a result of the Chernobyl accident. In military-scientific terms, this alteration to Soviet strategic thinking can be justified in terms of the Law of the Transition from Quantitative to Qualitative Changes.

It took eight to ten years for this process to bear fruit in the form of fundamental changes to military policy, a delay attributable to successive leadership changes in the Kremlin Brezhnev's death, reactions to the Reagan build-up, as well as ordinary bureaucratic inertia. The trend towards conventional means has been accelerated and dealt with on a concrete level by the current leadership. Nuclear disarmament and a defensive doctrine fit nicely into conventional war scenarios. Writing in 1983, analyst James M. McConnell concluded that

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<sup>24</sup>M.A. Moiseyev, "From the Position of a Defensive Doctrine," *Krasnaya zvezda* 10 February 1989: 1-2, in Daniel Goure, "A New Soviet National Security Policy for the 21st Century," *Strategic Review* 17 Fall (1989): 38.

"conventional war now seems the norm, nuclear war the exception."<sup>25</sup> This increased reliance on conventional warfighting is an important factor determining the character of Soviet naval missions.<sup>26</sup>

To develop and institute these principles, President Gorbachev has given unprecedented responsibility to academicians from the Soviet Academy of Sciences. While during the Brezhnev era the military had a virtual *carte blanche* to formulate defense policy, it now must contend with a range of often critical views from the *institutchiki*, or civilian specialists. New thinkers have come mostly from the Institute for the USA and Canada (IUSAC) and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO). Their increased responsibilities are reflected in membership in policymaking organs of the state, mainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme Soviet, and the Central Committee

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<sup>25</sup>James M. McConnell, *The Soviet Shift in Emphasis From Nuclear to Conventional*, Vol. 2 (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, June 1983) 27.

<sup>26</sup>Nuclear weapons are an enduring and vital element of Soviet strategy. As a prominent Soviet commentator, Aleksey Arbotov, puts it: "maintaining the strategic balance is an unconditional priority of our security and defense policy, and our strategy and armaments programs. As long as nuclear weapons have not been eliminated everywhere and fully, this task remains the main guarantee of our security and should be fulfilled, whatever the cost." "On Parity and Reasonable Sufficiency," *Mezhdunarodnaya zizhn'*, September 1988, 87-88 in James M. McConnell, *Soviet Military Strategy Towards 2010* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, November 1989) 11.



of the Communist Party.<sup>27</sup>

Whereas before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealt mainly with U.S. military developments and arms control, it now has significant input on decisions of Soviet force structure, particularly in the area of conventional force reductions. Within the Supreme Soviet, *institutchiki* have become members of and advisors to the new Committee for Defense and State Security, a body similar to the U.S. House Armed Services Committee. However, the membership of this committee is heavily weighted with officials from the military and industrial complex and has not served as an effective avenue for serious military reform.<sup>28</sup> On the Central Committee, several academicians have been given positions that may better enable them to influence the security debate.

Civilian specialists are challenging the Soviet Navy's traditional missions and certain building programs. Commenting on this trend, Admiral Chernavin, the Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, disapproved of the *institutchiki's* involvement in military affairs:

Unfortunately, recently many incompetent publications on this topic [military policy] by ignorant individuals are creating confusion and chaos and are leading to an

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<sup>27</sup>Scott R. Atkinson, "Soviet Defense Policy Under Gorbachev: The Growing Influence," An Occasional Paper, (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, March 1990) 7.

<sup>28</sup>Of the 43 members of the Committee, 19 are employed by defense industries and 6 are uniformed officers. There were no active duty or retired naval officers serving on this committee as of February 1991.

attempt to decide on the extremely important issue of the country's defense from positions which are emotional rather than reasonable. On the issue of the country's defense this is not only harmful but dangerous.<sup>29</sup>

Chernavin and other high-ranking military officers intend to maintain their professional control over the defense decision-making process, especially as it affects strategy. Decisions about the strategic employment of the Navy will remain with the General Staff and Navy leadership. But just as a small rudder can turn a large ship, pressure from civilian specialists to conform to new doctrinal requirements is expected to influence the future course of the Soviet Navy.

Certain principles of New Political Thinking have risen above the chorus of views on military reform to become a part of Soviet military doctrine. These changes have been articulated by political and military leaders as the requirements for "reasonable sufficiency" and a "defensive doctrine." There is agreement among military leaders on the need for reform. Most high-ranking officers view it in terms of a tradeoff between short-term cuts in defense spending necessary to revive the Soviet economy and improvements in the country's technological base that will in the long-term enable

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<sup>29</sup>Interview with Admiral V.N. Chernavin, "Vremya glubokikh preobrazovannii" [A Time of Far-Reaching Changes], *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 9 (1989): 4, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center. Developments surrounding the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze from his post as Foreign Minister appear to be the start of a power play by the military in order to reverse the major policies of New Political Thinking. Chief of the General Staff General Moiseyev has stated that the military is no longer bound by the terms of the CFE and START treaties negotiated by Shevardnadze. Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *The Washington Post* 30 January 1991: A21.

them to pursue high-tech military growth. The Soviets often refer to this compromise as a *peredyshka*, which translates as a "respite" or "breathing space," which can be accomplished within the "foreseeable future," meaning ten to fifteen years. While a complete collapse of the Soviet system would effectively cancel these plans, there exists the possibility that after *peredyshka's* technological rewards the Soviet Navy of the year 2000 will be an albeit smaller but much more capable force.

While there is a consensus among all those in the national security bureaucracy on the need to lessen the military burden and adopt a less offensive outlook, for whatever reason, questions concerning actual strategy and force structure are the subject of intense debate. The fact that this division does not follow along expected political and institutional lines suggests only one thing: *confusion*.

There are two different views among new thinkers on how the abstract concept of "reasonable sufficiency" should be applied to concrete force levels. The first calls for a paradigm shift in Soviet thinking away from existing defense requirements which, according to this view, are based solely on the Western threat and towards a more domestically oriented set of criteria encompassing true Soviet-determined requirements.<sup>30</sup> Under this definition, the Soviets would not necessarily attempt to match the U.S. weapon for weapon.

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<sup>30</sup>Meyer 144.

The second view takes the opposite tack: a force structure based on external referents. A number of Soviet commentators advocate countering the U.S. threat by maintaining strict numerical parity in conventional and nuclear forces. This definition appears to have the support of the majority of political elites and was the one first given by President Gorbachev when the requirement for reasonable sufficiency was unveiled at the 27th Party Congress. He made it clear then that "the character and level of this ceiling [reasonable sufficiency] continue to be restricted by the attitudes and actions of the USA and its partners in the blocs."<sup>31</sup>

Confusion surrounding the implementation of reasonable sufficiency doctrine can be seen as a tactic used by the political leadership to divide the military so that it cannot effectively oppose changes in defense spending and force structure.<sup>32</sup> If this was really their aim, then the tactic has worked. Within the Soviet military there are divergent views on how to implement President Gorbachev's mandate for reasonable sufficiency. In their writings on the subject,

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<sup>31</sup>M.S. Gorbachev, *Political Report* 74. Along the same lines, Marshal Yazov states: "The limits of reasonable sufficiency are set not by us, but by the actions of the United States and NATO." D.T. Yazov, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact," *Pravda* 27 July 1987, in Raymond L. Garthoff, "New Thinking in Soviet Military Doctrine," *The Washington Quarterly* 11.3 (1988): 140.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas M. Nichols and Theodore W. Karasik, "The Impact of 'Reasonable Sufficiency' on the Soviet Ministry of Defense," *Naval War College Review*, 42.4 (1989): 22-36.

Soviet officers sometimes use terms other than "reasonable sufficiency." They instead choose a variant that conveys to readers in and out of the Soviet Union their differences with the new thinkers definition of reasonable sufficiency. This is useful in identifying three different schools of thought within the military.

The first comprises a large group of officers who talk of maintaining a "reliable defense" [*nadezhnaia oborona*].<sup>33</sup> Their views are essentially the same as those that have guided military development in the past. They are opposed to any spending reductions and are asking for the same amount of resources or more. Military reform is seen more as a way to raise standards of discipline and improve the efficiency of military production. Strategically, they advocate forward operations to defeat an aggressor before he can reach Soviet territory. According to this group, the West is still a serious threat. General Moiseyev states in the Soviet military newspaper *Red Star* in February 1989:

The reality is that the USA, for example, has not given up, and is not thinking of giving up, [even] one of its military technical programs...Thus the matter is not some sort of "imaginary military threat" to our country, invented, as some think, by military men, but the urgent necessity of a search for new ways to guarantee the reliable defense of the peaceful labor of the Soviet people.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Nichols and Karasik 23.

<sup>34</sup>"*Na strazhe mira i sotsializma*" [In Defense of Peace and Socialism], *Krasnaya zvezda*, 23 February 1989: 2, in Nichols and Karasik 30.

The second, and more moderate, school of thought is a policy of "sufficient defense" [*dostatocchnaya oborona*]. This group supports military reform in principle, but opposes large cuts in defense spending, unilateral force reductions, and holds firmly to the concept of quantitative parity in strategic nuclear weapons. The most prominent member of this group is Marshal Akhromeev, former Chief of the General Staff and a close advisor to President Gorbachev.<sup>35</sup> Admiral Chernavin is also an apparent advocate of "sufficient defense." When asked to explain his definition of reasonable sufficiency, Chernavin stated:

Today what I would call not a military but a political concept of defense sufficiency exists. How can this defense sufficiency be understood? In political circles such a term can be used and it will probably be correct. However, we military people cannot be guided by such a term because we must have precise calculations; we must establish a correlation of the forces of the probable enemy and our own forces, quantitatively, qualitatively, and in other ways...Now as we approach *d e f e n s e* sufficiency, as we speak of *sufficient defense*, we must first of all speak about sufficient judiciousness in our approach to this question because in this question it is possible to go to extremes.<sup>36</sup>

Though it is clearly not as simple as the term that Chernavin chose to use and his position as Commander in Chief, this definition of reasonable sufficiency is an important guide to how the Navy may react to upcoming budgetary reductions.

A third group supports the basic definition of reasonable

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<sup>35</sup>Nichols and Karasik 23.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Admiral of the Fleet V.N. Chernavin on Moscow television, date and place of interview not given, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-151, 6 August 1990, 60.

sufficiency as it was drafted by the new thinkers [*razumnoi dostatochnosti*]. They are willing to go along with Gorbachev's plans for substantial reductions in defense spending.<sup>37</sup> This group does not view quantitative parity as an essential goal, but opposes the idea of unilateral reductions or asymmetrical arms control. Composed mainly of officers from the lower echelons of the military and some that have retired, this group is small in comparison to the first two and is not expected to have a significant impact on the defense agenda.

Differing conceptions of reasonable sufficiency within the military complicate the task of implementing Gorbachev's reforms on the level of strategy and force structure. This environment of confusion surrounds decisions affecting the future of the Soviet Navy. But, whatever differences may exist among high-ranking officers, they are clearly not as great as those between the military and the civilian leadership transformed by New Political Thinking. In the face of strident criticism from the *institutchiki* and the growing temptation for the political leadership to order deeper cuts in defense spending, the military leadership is expected to smooth over internal differences and reassert control over the national security decision-making process.

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<sup>37</sup>In October 1990, Gorbachev rejected the proposal of his economic advisor for a crash transition to a market economy, namely the Shatalin 500 day plan. This is pertinent to the conception of reasonable sufficiency doctrine because the Shatalin plan would have necessitated deeper cuts in the defense budget.

While reasonable sufficiency is aimed at reducing the size of the Soviet Armed Forces, defensive doctrine is intended to change their character. Soviet officials have always asserted that their military doctrine was by nature defensive.<sup>38</sup> In terms of strategy, though, the Soviets emphasized the offensive. Perhaps the most significant aspect of new political thinking on security is that military strategy is now being subjected to the requirements of an updated defensive doctrine. Whether this can actually be accomplished is another question.

As in English, the inherent ambiguity of the word *oborona*, or defense, makes it very difficult to judge Soviet intentions. It might either mean a socio-political defense characterized by a reluctance to attack or initiate aggression or, in a military-technical sense, a form of combat as opposed to an offensive.<sup>39</sup> A "defensive doctrine" involves both aspects of *oborona*. The military-technical aspect of a defensive doctrine is of primary concern to this study of naval strategy. In its simplest terms, a defensive doctrine requires a strategy and force structure capable of repelling

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<sup>38</sup>Colonel General M.A. Gareyev, a Deputy Chief of the General Staff and noted military theorist, states: "The adherence to the cause of peace and peaceful collaboration with other countries is determined by the essence and nature of the socialist society. In our nation there are no and cannot be any persons interested in an aggressive policy and war. The defensive focus of Soviet military doctrine stems invariably from this." in M.A. Gareyev, M.V. Frunze: *Military Theorist* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984) 342.

<sup>39</sup>McConnell, *Soviet Military Strategy* 4.



enemy aggression but not capable of launching a surprise attack or carrying out massive military operations with the goal of occupying enemy territory.

Coincident with the shift in emphasis from nuclear to conventional means in Soviet military thinking is a heightened interest in defensive operations. In his book *Survival Is Not Enough*, Richard Pipes writes:

In the 1890s, the Russian General Staff carried out a comprehensive study of the history of Russian warfare since the foundations of the state. In the summary volume, the editor told his readers that they could take pride in their country's military record and face the future with confidence - between 1700 and 1870, Russia had spent 106 years fighting 38 military campaigns, of which 36 had been "offensive" and a mere 2 defensive.<sup>40</sup>

Similar studies were conducted by members of the Soviet General Staff during the early 1980s, but the focus was instead on the future and the conclusions did not inspire confidence. Offensive developments within U.S. and NATO strategy punctuated by the deployment of Tomahawk and Pershing II intermediate-range, nuclear-capable missiles to Europe in 1983 and the Reagan administration's stated goal of "naval superiority," set off alarms in the halls of the Kremlin and led to a serious reconsideration of long-held offensive strategies. The Soviets faced the prospect of deep strikes against their territory from both land and sea. The General Staff began to explore new defensive strategies in order to

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<sup>40</sup>Richard Pipes, *Survival is Not Enough* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984) 38.

counter these threats.<sup>41</sup> New thinkers have picked up on this defensive trend and taken it far beyond what Soviet military leaders originally intended.

There has been considerable criticism by the military of the view held by many new thinkers that a defensive doctrine requires an exclusively defensive strategy. Many Soviet officers see this requirement as an unwarranted restriction on their professional responsibility to develop an effective theater strategy.<sup>42</sup> To the Soviet commander, defense forms a part of the first phase of war after which it is absolutely essential to carry the fight to the enemy and destroy his war-waging potential. According to Minister of Defense Dimitri Yazov:

Soviet military doctrine considers the defense as the main form of military operations in repelling aggression...Defense alone, however, cannot defeat the aggressor. Therefore after repulsing the attack, troops and fleets must be able to conduct a decisive offensive [emphasis original].<sup>43</sup>

Another article in *Red Star* on training requirements for defensive operations states that the ultimate goal in war

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<sup>41</sup>Interview with Edward L. Warner III, Sovietologist, The RAND Corporation, 15 October 1990. Mr. Warner is an established authority on Soviet military affairs and has written several books and articles on the subject to include, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics: An Institutional Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1977); *Next Moves: An Arms Control Agenda for the 1990s* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1989); and *Defense Policy of the Soviet Union* (Santa Monica, CA.: RAND, 1990).

<sup>42</sup>Meyer 153.

<sup>43</sup>D.T. Yazov, *On Guard Over Socialism and Peace* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987) 32-33, trans. FBIS, JPRS-UMA-88-001-L, 12.

would be to "debilitate the enemy and destroy him utterly."<sup>44</sup> While much of the implementation of a defensive doctrine is still being debated, these statements suggest that offensive operations are still very much a part of Soviet strategy.

It is very difficult, at times impossible, to distinguish between offensive and defensive weapon systems and strategies. Much depends on the circumstances surrounding an actual conflict and from which side the analysis is being conducted. This study is being conducted from the Soviet standpoint and presupposes that a defensive doctrine cannot be translated into a purely defensive military strategy. The strategic implications for the Soviet Navy of a defensive doctrine will be evaluated according to the relative emphasis that Soviet political and military leaders place on both defensive and offensive options.

The Soviet General Staff is currently working out the future strategic employment of the *Voyenno-Morskoi Flot* within a frame of reference that is highly deductive and based on the systematic requirements of a unified military strategy. In an effort to reconstruct the Soviet mode of thinking, the same approach will serve as the foundation for this study. Soviet naval strategy towards the year 2000 will be the product of a fundamentally new perception of national security. Its

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<sup>44</sup>Colonel G. Miranovich and Colonel V. Zhitarenko, "Chem sil'na oborona? Na etot vopros popytalis' otvetit' organizatory pokaznogo zanyatiya," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 10 December 1987, in Steven P. Adragna, "Doctrine and Strategy," *Orbis*, 33.2 (1989): 168.

requirements are a reduction in the size of the armed forces according to the principle of reasonable sufficiency and changes in their strategic employment in order to reflect a new defensive doctrine. Against the background of a strong and enduring Soviet military mindset, questions concerning the Navy's size and strategy will be answered as part of a complex interrelationship between the seemingly uncontrollable political and economic forces of *perestroika* at home and the need to protect and further state interests under the banner of New Political Thinking abroad.

## CHAPTER TWO

## Economic Constraints on Soviet Naval Development

Reasonable sufficiency doctrine and the economic constraints that follow in its wake have the potential of forcing substantial cuts in the Soviet Navy's budget in the 1990s. Even the late Admiral Gorshkov recognized the need to sacrifice naval development during periods of economic reform. Writing in 1983, he made the following statement concerning the Navy and economic imperatives:

There must be a strict accounting not only of the Navy's missions and conditions for accompanying them, but also of capacities of the economy. As history shows, it was at times necessary to make forced decisions on incomplete balancing of the Navy due to a lack of such capacities.<sup>1</sup>

So far the Navy has avoided the type of reductions that would limit its ability to carry out traditional missions and continues to sail as the fulfillment of Gorshkov's vision of a balanced power fleet. While economic realities thrust on the military by the political leadership will have an impact on strategy, the General Staff will not go about setting mission priorities using cost effectiveness as its sole criterion. The Navy might weather the current period of economic reform and emerge relatively unaffected should the

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<sup>1</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, "Questions on the Theory of the Navy," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 7 (1983): 34, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

political leadership and the General Staff decide that it is making a large contribution to an evolving military strategy. So, while domestic economic reform will continue to affect Soviet naval development well into the 1990s, the most important developments to watch are those that signal an overall reduction in the fleets' warfighting capabilities.

#### BUDGETARY RULES OF THE ROAD

Explicit economic constraints and certain institutional and strategic guidelines will dictate the Navy's share of the defense budget. These can be summarized in three budgetary rules of the road. The first is that the Navy's share of a shrinking budget will be determined at two higher levels of decision-making that are generally impervious to its advocacy. Decision makers on the first level are the top political leadership on the Politburo and the combined civilian and military leadership on the Defense Council, a body that sits atop the national security bureaucracy and has an often secretive civilian and military membership. Also a part of the first level are any *institutchiki* who have gained access to President Gorbachev. The Ministry of Defense and General Staff make up the second level and are responsible for developing military strategy and drafting the long-range defense plans that, with the approval of the political leadership, become the military's operating budget.

The second rule is relatively new dating back to the

advent of reasonable sufficiency doctrine when the political leadership assumed full control over the defense-budget agenda. Major decisions as to the amount of funding going to the Navy and on whether to build new classes of warships and submarines will be made by the top political leadership with professional input from the General Staff. Explicit budgetary limitations have been placed on the General Staff. In February 1989, President Gorbachev announced plans to cut defense expenditures by 14.2% and weapons procurement funding by 19.2% by 1990.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the General Staff has conducted intensive studies on how and where to implement these reductions.

The last budgetary rule of the road is that resources will be distributed according to mission priorities and requirements, not cost effectiveness. Even though economic constraints are forcing wholesale changes in Soviet strategy and force structure, it is still the Navy's contribution to a unified military strategy that is the deciding factor in determining the amount of funding and resources it will receive in the future. The General Staff first determines

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<sup>2</sup>Edward L. Warner III, *The Defense Policy of the Soviet Union* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, August 1989) 25. It appears that the Soviets do not know how much they are spending on defense. General Moiseyev stated that in FY 1989 the defense budget was 77.3 billion rubles or 15.6% of the nation's budget. However, shortly after Moiseyev released these figures it was admitted by Marshal Akhromeyev that they were inaccurate. M.A. Moiseyev, "The USSR Defense Budget," *Pravda* 11 June 1989: 5, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center; Testimony of Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev before the House Armed Services Committee, 21 July 1989.

mission priorities and requirements based on the recent conclusions of military science and, only after this, decides on the best way to accomplish these missions in light of economic constraints.<sup>3</sup> Cost effectiveness becomes important when deciding on alternative means of accomplishing the same mission. In some cases this involves choosing between the Navy and another service. A prime example is the mission of presenting a credible nuclear deterrent. The decision of whether to construct additional ballistic missile submarines must, along with other factors, be compared to the cost of basing these missiles on land in hardened silos. Either way, the General Staff will ensure that a credible nuclear deterrent is maintained. The Soviets are not about to compromise their security in the face of real and perceived threats from abroad for the sake of *perestroika* at home.

#### DEBATING THE NAVY'S SHARE OF A SHRINKING BUDGET

The recurring debate in the Soviet Union over the utility of a large navy has intensified under *perestroika* as civilian and military officials search for ways to reduce military spending without compromising the nation's defense. Challenges to the Navy's share of a shrinking military budget

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<sup>3</sup>Sovietologist Stephen Meyer states that there is no evidence that missions are compared on a cost-effective basis. Stephen M. Meyer, "Economic Constraints in Soviet Military Decision-Making," in *The Impoverished Superpower*, eds. Henry S. Rowen and Charles Wolf, Jr. (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1990) 218-219.



have come from within the military and from without, mainly from *institutchiki* eager to reduce all aspects of military spending. With sometimes different motives, opponents of naval development are unified in their view that the current size of the fleet and the direction which it is heading is an expensive luxury. The Navy, they say, should be downsized and the savings channeled into the civilian sector or, in the case of critics from within the military, to other services. This charge must be viewed as part of a larger reduction in the Soviet Union's global ambitions.<sup>4</sup>

Civilian specialists are becoming increasingly outspoken in their criticism of the current size and funding of the Soviet Navy. Consistent with Gorbachev's assertion that the U.S. has tried to "economically exhaust" the Soviet Union through the arms race, some new thinkers have stated that the U.S. is to blame for the burden of their having to maintain a large navy and that the fleet should be reduced to a realistic size. According to three civilian specialists at IUSAC, the United States has been trying to "push the USSR into the water since the 1960s" and provoke it into "building

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<sup>4</sup>For instance, S. Blagovolin, a departmental director at IMEMO, attacked the Gorshkovian vision of the Soviet Navy when he said: "[we] have not such overseas political and economic interests which would require us to spread our military presence around the globe and to create a navy to safeguard the latter." "Military Power-How Much, of What Kind, and for What?" *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* August 1989: 8, in Norman C. Cigar, "The Navy's Battle of the Budget: Soviet Style," *Naval War College Review* 43.2 (1990): 11.

large surface ships, including aircraft carriers."<sup>5</sup> The opposite argument has also been made that the growth of the Soviet Navy to near-global capabilities occasioned the United States Navy to adopt a more assertive and forward-offensive oriented approach, the Maritime Strategy, thereby negating an increase in the size of the fleet. Either way, the rapid naval build-up of the last twenty years is viewed as not having improved the strategic position of the Soviet Union, at least not to the extent that would justify such a large amount of funding and resources given to the Navy.

According to Georgi Sturua, a section chief at IMEMO, the rapid growth of the Navy after World War II was "unrealistic" and should be redressed according to the following universal argument:

In all countries of the world, the navy is considered to be an 'expensive' branch of the armed forces...Provided that the country's genuine defense needs are satisfied, savings in the military and naval sphere would considerably help to overcome the social and economic crisis in which the country has found itself today.<sup>6</sup>

Sturua goes on to hint that the Supreme Soviet will in the future play a much larger role in deciding the allocation of resources within the defense budget. Presumably, the intent here is to effect naval force reductions through public

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<sup>5</sup>V.V. Zhurkin, S.A. Karaganov, and A.V. Kortunov, "O razumnoi dostatochnosti" [On Reasonable Sufficiency] SShA, December 1987: 17, in Cigar 19.

<sup>6</sup>Georgi Sturua, "A view of the Navy Through the Prism of Perestroyka," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*, No. 5 May 1990: 21-32, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-115-S, 14 June 1990, 39.

opinion. If given the increased power, an unlikely development in the near-term, the Supreme Soviet could be a factor because it is generally regarded that a large segment of the Soviet population sees no need for a large navy.<sup>7</sup> The Navy appears to have recognized this possibility and has assured Soviet citizens that "every ruble and every gram of fuel and raw materials" is being used efficiently.<sup>8</sup> Admiral Chernavin stated in his review of the 27th Party Congress:

Our task is to take under firm control every kilogram or litre of fuel, of lubricants, every hour of engine use, of electrical and general machinery operations, so that they are used only as designated and only for the improvement of readiness. There are not a few savings to be made here.<sup>9</sup>

For the most part, the military leadership is unified in its efforts to make the best of budgetary constraints and seems to have adjusted to the first wave of cuts instituted by President Gorbachev. However, it is evident that a certain degree of interservice rivalry exists within the military and that the Navy is a common target. Except for an occasional article or indirect criticism, interservice rivalry in the Soviet Union is kept behind closed doors. One of the more insightful accounts of this interservice rivalry came from

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<sup>7</sup>Theodore M. Neely, personal interview, 16 November 1990.

<sup>8</sup>"Savings and Thriftiness are Tasks of State Importance," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 1 (1989): 62, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>9</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Soviet Navy Looking Ahead to the 27th Congress of the CPSU," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1986): page check, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

Major General Yuri Lebedev, a former arms control negotiator, who stated in 1989 that plans to reduce the defense budget have intensified partisan politics within the Soviet military.<sup>10</sup> The Navy's status as the minority service on most of the military-economic planning organs of the state magnifies this situation. Officers from the ground forces have traditionally been the dominant influence. Of the twenty places reserved for the military on the Central Committee, for example, the ground forces normally occupy fifteen, the Navy, only one.<sup>11</sup> While interservice rivalry now seems to be somewhat less of a factor since Gorbachev's 1989 defense spending reductions were programmed into the next five-year defense plan, it might intensify should the military be ordered to make further reductions and force the Navy to absorb disproportionate cuts.

The most outspoken opponent of naval development within the military is Colonel-General Gareyev, a former Deputy Chief of the General Staff in charge of the Military Science Directorate. In his widely read book *M.V. Frunze-Military Theorist*, Gareyev used some sharp words to describe the Navy leadership:

...the specialist sailors, naturally, in being involved with their job, will inflate any figure, while the

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<sup>10</sup>George C. Wilson, "Soviet General Says He Dreams of End to Arms Race," *The Washington Post* 9 May 1989: A11. Lebedev stated that "Naval officers say aviation should be smaller."

<sup>11</sup>Michael McGwire, "Gorshkov's Navy," *Proceedings*, August 1989: 44.

enormous expenditure we have assigned to aviation we should be doubly and triply cautious in terms of expenditures on the fleet.<sup>12</sup>

Gareyev was a very influential figure among members of the General Staff until the late 1980s, and was probably responsible for a large part of the interservice rivalry involving the Navy. While still on active duty, he has been assigned to the office of the General Inspectorate, a relatively unattractive post regarded as the last step before retirement for many officers, and is now considered out of the mainstream of Soviet military leaders.<sup>13</sup> Gareyev's lower profile is significant in that it will probably result in an improved working relationship between the Navy leadership and that of other branches of the Armed Forces.

The Navy has been put on the defensive by challenges to its current level of funding from within the military. There are indications that Admiral Chernavin and his deputy, Admiral Kapitanets, are anxious over the possibility of disproportionate cuts. They clearly would like more input on decisions affecting the Navy and have engaged in a subtle campaign to influence such decisions. When asked about cuts in the defense budget in an interview in *Red Star*, Admiral Chernavin stated that he agreed with them in principle, but

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<sup>12</sup>Gareyev, *M.V. Frunze* 245. He goes on to invoke the name of Lenin by stating that the leader viewed a "significant fleet with a large number of capital surface ships for the Soviet state was an 'excessive luxury.'"

<sup>13</sup>Theodore M. Neely, personal interview, 20 February 1991.

that they should be more "equitable."<sup>14</sup> Admiral Kapitanets defends that the Navy's share of the defense budget is "not great" and that funds going to the Navy are spent only for their "immediate purpose."<sup>15</sup>

The Navy has carefully defended its interests by using oblique historical arguments. Admiral Kapitanets claimed that the Navy leadership did not have much input to decisions under Stalin and Khrushchev.<sup>16</sup> On another occasion, he criticizes Khrushchev by making specific references to the decision not to build aircraft carriers as examples of "voluntarism," which in Marxist terminology is a serious offense meaning that the objective laws of history have been violated.<sup>17</sup> On the whole, the Navy accuses Khrushchev of lacking strategic vision and understanding of military matters. This historical criticism is an indirect and safe means for the Navy to oppose any drastic reductions in funding and force structure being considered by the political leadership.

Economic constraints have intensified the perennial Soviet debate over questions about the size and composition of

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<sup>14</sup>"Responsibility for *Perestroyka*," an interview with Admiral V.N. Chernavin by Captain 1st Rank V. Lukashevich, *Krasnaya zvezda* 9 June 1989: 2, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>15</sup>"How Should the Navy Develop?" an interview with Admiral of the Fleet I.M. Kapitanets by Captain 2d Class S. Turchenko, *Krasnaya zvezda* 15 August 1989: 2, trans. FBIS-SOV-89-157, 16 August 1989, 104.

<sup>16</sup>Cigar 9.

<sup>17</sup>Cigar 14.

naval forces. The Institutchiki and mild interservice rivalry are two factors that may effect the level of funding for the Navy in the future. Like U.S. admirals, the Soviet Navy leadership is compelled to defend its interests, but remain part of the larger team. The degree to which the Navy leadership is successful in this defense ultimately depends on how well they can articulate an objective and efficient contribution to a strictly unified military strategy.

#### MANAGING ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS

The Soviet Navy's budget can be divided into the following categories: operations and maintenance; acquisition; and research and development. So far the Navy has managed to avoid major cuts in funding for acquisition and research and development, two areas that have a direct and lasting impact on the strength of the fleet. This has been made possible through savings gained from the scrapping of obsolete or near-retirement units, modest personnel cutbacks, lower operational costs as a result of a reduced deployment schedule, and a decreased presence at overseas bases.

The Soviet Navy currently faces bloc obsolescence in both the surface and submarine fleets, a consequence of the rapid naval build-up of the 1960s. Scrapping these units as they reach the end of their operational lives enables the Soviets to reduce maintenance costs. Additionally, the sale of old warships on the world scrap market is a source of much needed

hard currency.<sup>18</sup> Over the past four years, 46 submarines and 89 principal surface combatants have left the fleet. (Table 1, page 50) Most of these units were ill-equipped for modern naval combat and had been sitting pierside as part of the reserve fleet for years. The scrapping of obsolete units has not resulted in a qualitative reduction in the Navy's capabilities. Quantitative reductions in the fleet are being offset by qualitative improvements to individual platforms. For example, the *Golf* class ballistic missile submarines stricken from the Baltic Fleet provided a theater nuclear strike capability that has been replaced by the deployment of better equipped *Yankee I* SSBNs. A similar relationship exists with the surface fleet. The *Sverdlov* cruiser is a product of the 1950s. Newer Soviet warships are as much as 10,000 tons greater in displacement and are equipped with modern sensors and missiles that enable them to cover a much greater area at sea. Overall, the Soviets can maintain or improve the correlation of naval forces by replacing older vessels with newer units linked together by an improved surveillance/command and control system and greater numbers of missiles.

Current naval force reductions stand in sharp contrast to those instituted by Khrushchev in the mid-to late-1950s.

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<sup>18</sup>Over 50,000 deadweight tons of discarded Soviet warships are currently for sale on the world scrap market. John Pay and Geoffrey Till, eds. *East-West Relations in the 1990s: The Naval Dimension* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990) 159.



Table 1

## RECENT NAVAL FORCE REDUCTIONS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Submarines</u>	<u>Cruisers</u>	<u>Frigates</u>	<u>Destroyers</u>
87-88	1 <i>Golf II</i> (SSB) 5 <i>Foxtrot</i> (SS)	2 <i>Sverdlov</i>	7 <i>Riga</i> 3 <i>Petya</i>	4 <i>Kanin</i> (DDG) 1 <i>Sam Kotlin</i> (DDG) 6 <i>Kotlin</i> (DD)
89-90*	12 <i>Golf II</i> 1 <i>Golf V</i> (SSB) 5 <i>Echo I</i> (SSN) 1 <i>Echo II</i> (SSGN) 21 <i>Whiskey</i> (SS)	7 <i>Sverdlov</i>	15 <i>Riga</i> 15 <i>Mirka</i> 3 <i>Petya</i>	2 <i>Mod Kashin</i> (DDG) 3 <i>Mod Kildin</i> (DDG) 4 <i>Kanin</i> (DDG) 7 <i>Sam Kotlin</i> (DDG) 11 <i>Kotlin</i> (DD) 9 <i>Skory</i>

Source: *Janes Fighting Ships 1989-90*

\* Soviet officials stated in the Fall of 1989 that a total of 26 diesel submarines and 45 surface ships including 4 cruisers and 4 destroyers were scheduled to leave the fleet in 1990. (*Pravda*, 31 October 1989: 6)

During a period of post-Stalinist economic reform and nuclear sufficiency, the political leadership viewed the surface ship as an expendable platform. Two weeks after Stalin died in 1953, the naval force reductions began. Khrushchev ordered the scrapping of large numbers of the Navy's surface ships, and went so far as to destroy newly commissioned vessels and units under construction in Leningrad.<sup>19</sup> The net result of Khrushchev's restructuring was a reduction of roughly three hundred warships. Even though the correlation of nuclear forces has changed since then, it is significant that

<sup>19</sup>On a visit to the United States, Khrushchev boasted of plans to eliminate 90% of the Navy's cruisers. William J. Jorden, "Premier Strolls Through the City," *New York Times* 22 September 1959: 22; See Robert W. Herrick, *Soviet Naval Strategy* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1968) 71-80.

Gorbachev with an economic situation clearly worse than that facing Khrushchev, has not instituted a similar program.

Naval force reductions will continue during the 1990s as more units become obsolete. The Soviets tend to scrap surface ships and submarines at around the thirty-year-point. Using this as a guide, this study projects that the following surface ships will leave the fleet in the 1990s: 20 *Kresta I* and *Kresta II* cruisers; 13 *Kashin* destroyers; 30 *Kanin*, *Kildin*, and *Kotlin* destroyers; 20 *Krivak* frigates; and 2 *Moskva* helicopter carriers. The submarine fleet faces even larger reductions that include 26 *Yankee Is*, 28 *Echos*, 12 *Juliett*, 9 *Charlie Is*, 6 *Charlie IIs*, 6 *Victor Is*, and all remaining *Whiskeys* and *Foxtrots*. There will definitely be an overall reduction in the size of the fleet with an increased need for newer units to replace what will soon be real losses in the Navy's warfighting potential.

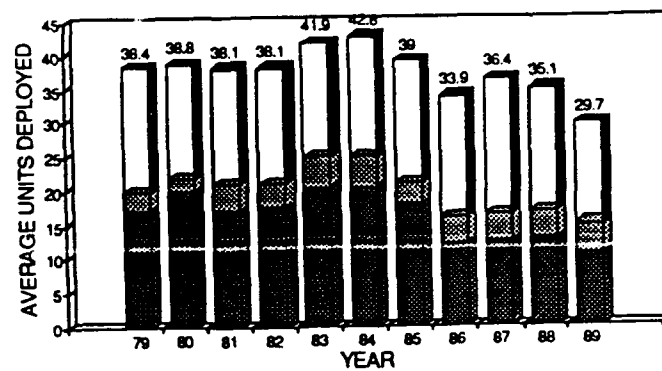
Over the past few years the Soviet Navy has reduced its out-of-area deployments, thus continuing a trend first apparent in 1986. (Figure 2, page 52) The Soviets have not conducted a major oceanic exercise since the summer of 1985. A Norwegian source estimates that there has been a reduction of more than 50% in the time spent by major surface ships of the Northern Fleet outside their home waters in the Barents Sea.<sup>20</sup> Soviet naval presence before and during the Persian

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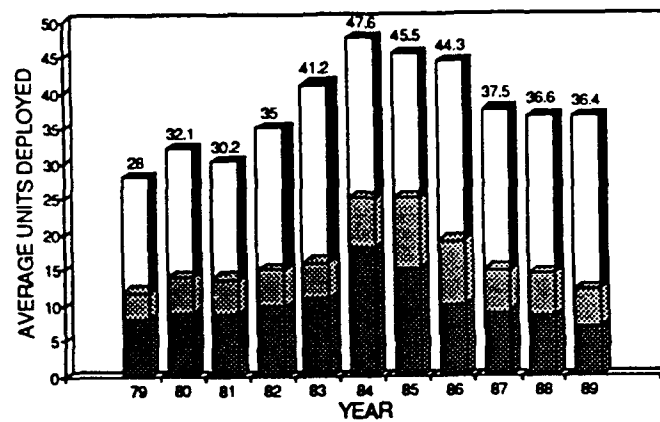
<sup>20</sup>Sea-days dropped from a high of 456 in 1985 to 207 in 1986 and 114 in 1987. Tonne Huitfeldt, "Major Drop in Soviet Norwegian Sea Exercises," *Janes Defense Weekly* 5 March 1988: 382.

# SOVIET NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS

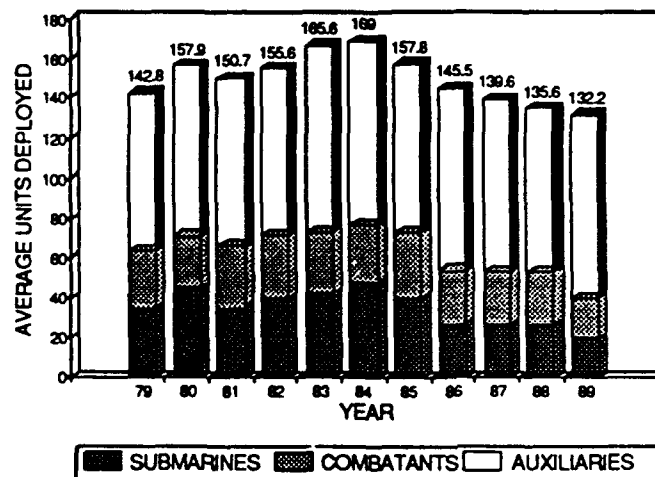
## ATLANTIC OCEAN 1979-1989



## PACIFIC REGION 1979-1989



## WORLDWIDE



Source: Office of Naval Intelligence, 1990

Gulf War was minimal. Major reductions have also been noted in the presence of Soviet ships and aircraft at overseas bases in such places as Cuba, Angola, Libya, and Syria, and they have nearly vacated their base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

There are three main reasons for this downward trend. The need to conserve costs associated with long open-ocean deployments, changes in Soviet foreign policy as a result of New Political Thinking, and the transition to a more defensive strategy aimed primarily at countering the U.S. Maritime Strategy have been cited by Soviet officials and U.S. analysts. Soviet officials tend to emphasize the latter two explanations citing a reduced deployment schedule as evidence of a defensive doctrine in action or, more appropriately, inaction. Chief of the General Staff Marshal Akhromeyev told Pentagon officials in 1988 that cuts in overseas naval deployments were an example of Moscow's intention to develop a purely defensive doctrine.<sup>21</sup> While a defensive doctrine does mean that more emphasis will be placed on operations closer to home, it is economic constraints that are the driving factor behind the Soviet decision to reduce out-of-area deployments.

Commenting in 1989, Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks, Director of Naval Intelligence, pointed to economic constraints as the main reason for a reduced deployment schedule:

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<sup>21</sup>Michael R. Gordon, "Soviets Decrease Use of Navy And Curb Overseas Exercises," *New York Times* 17 July 1988: A1.

Overall Soviet Navy OPTEMPO remained at reduced levels last year, continuing the trend begun in 1986. In 1988 Soviet naval units spent more time in port and at anchor and less time at sea than in previous years; they also reduced exercise activity, especially out-of-area exercises...Such reduced OPTEMPO has an immediate impact on reducing costs for major consumables such as fuel, and may also reduce the burden on shipyards since required repairs can be scheduled at longer intervals.<sup>22</sup>

Direct evidence of this rationale comes from Admiral Chernavin who, in 1986, stated that because of budgetary cuts naval operations will be limited to an "operational-tactical" scale until 1990 which, in Soviet terms, means a range of less than 500km from home ports.<sup>23</sup> According to one Soviet naval officer, recent increases in the cost of inputs such as technology, fuel, food, and uniforms have raised the Navy's operating costs considerably.<sup>24</sup> A reduced deployment schedule is an attractive alternative for the Navy when faced with major cuts in its force structure. This trend is expected to continue for at least the next few years because of instability in the Soviet economy. Even so, Admiral Chernavin and others may be expecting cuts in acquisition and

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<sup>22</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, U.S. Navy, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on Intelligence Issues, 23 February 1989, 13-14.

<sup>23</sup>N.V. Chernavin, "The Navy-The 27th Party Congress," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 1 (1986): 9, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center; James T. Westwood, "Soviet Reactions to the U.S. Maritime Strategy," *Naval War College Review* 41.3 (1988): 63-64.

<sup>24</sup>Captain 1st Rank A. Shevchenko, "Den'gi..v trubu," *Krasnaya zvezda* 21 January 1989: 2, in Norman Cigar "The Navy's Battle of the Budget: Soviet Style," *Naval War College Review* 43.2 (1990): 19.

are therefore putting out to sea less and less in an effort to extend unit service life and channel resources into the shipyards.

Concrete indications that the Navy will play a substantially smaller role in future Soviet strategy would be a drastic slowdown in construction rates. While obsolete units continue to leave the fleet in large numbers, acquisition of newer units proceeds with few significant slowdowns. On Soviet Navy Day, Admiral Panin, Chief of the Navy's Political Directorate, optimistically pointed out this trend with optimism when he stated that "the share of modern ships is growing as the Soviet Navy is reducing its strength by decommissioning old ships."<sup>25</sup>

Along with reductions in the military budget affecting the Navy are plans for the conversion of defense production facilities to civilian use. The Soviets have announced the goal of changing the defense/civilian production mix from 60/40 to 40/60 by 1995.<sup>26</sup> The lack of hard currency to pay for construction of merchant ships in Eastern Europe and the

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<sup>25</sup>Admiral V.I. Panin, interview with Aleksandr Yakovlev, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-154, 9 August 1990, 57.

<sup>26</sup>Lauren L. Van Metre, *Soviet Style Conversion: Will it Succeed?* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, 1990) 5; As of February 1991, only 5 or 6 of 400 defense industries planned for conversion had been fully converted to the production of consumer goods. "Indicators of Change in Soviet Security Policies," *Bulletin of the The Atlantic Council* 2.2 12 February 1991: 1; Georgi Arbatov, Director of IUSAC and a Peoples Deputy, states that the conversion process is moving very slowly charges that there are no real plans for converting 60% of the military output. *Izvestiya* 25 October 1990: 3, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

condition of some of the economies there may accelerate this process. It should be remembered that conversion of shipbuilding facilities, though it does have the effect of institutionalizing force reductions in policy terms, can just as easily be converted back to the construction of combatants.

As of February 1991, the Soviets were constructing four classes of principal surface combatants. These include the *Udaloy* and *Sovremennyy* class destroyers, *Krivak* class frigates, and a follow-on to the *Krivak* designated by NATO as the Bal-Com 8. The *Sovremennyy* and *Udaloy* classes continue to enter the fleet at a rate of about one vessel per year. A class of modified *Udaloy* destroyers is expected to begin construction in 1992.<sup>27</sup> In terms of tonnage, the number of surface ships entering the fleet in 1989 was the most in over twenty years and exceeded that which was scrapped during the same year.<sup>28</sup>

Two significant cutbacks in warship construction have been made as of February 1991. The first was the decision not to continue construction on the fifth unit of the *Kirov* class. *Kirov* class battlecruisers are the most capable warships in the Soviet inventory and, aside from the aircraft carriers, are the most expensive to build. The fifth *Kirov* was laid down in 1989 at Leningrad's Baltic Works, but work on it

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<sup>27</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power 1990* (Washington: GPO, 1990) 85.

<sup>28</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990, 27.

stopped shortly thereafter and the building ways have since been converted to civilian use.<sup>29</sup> The latest cutback was the cancellation of the *Slava* class cruiser program. The fourth and last unit of the *Slava* class was commissioned in August 1990 and the division of the large Nikolayev shipbuilding facilities on the Black Sea where it was constructed is now being used to build merchant ships.<sup>30</sup> However, there is reason to believe that the decision to stop production of the *Slava* class was not motivated by budgetary constraints. Deliveries of the cruisers had been proceeding at a very slow rate with a six year gap between the third and fourth units (1979-1985). There is reliable information that the Soviets originally planned to build only four of the *Slava* class.<sup>31</sup> To date, only the *Kirov* and *Slava* yards have been converted to civilian use.

The most controversial program, however, is the construction of large-deck conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft carriers of the *Kuznetsov* class and follow-on

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<sup>29</sup>Soviet Military Power 84; Moscow Domestic News Service, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-190, 1 October 1990, 62.

<sup>30</sup>Theodore M. Neely, personal interview, 20 February 1991; "Nikolayev Shipyard Ceasing Warship Production," *Krasnaya zvezda* 15 September 1990: 6, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-182, 19 September 1990, 84.

<sup>31</sup>Norman Polmar, personal interview, 15 March 1991. Norman Polmar is an internationally known naval analyst and author of the *Guide to the Soviet Navy*. He has directed analytical studies for the U.S. Navy, various agencies of the Department of Defense, and several foreign and American shipbuilding and aerospace firms. He is the author of over fifteen books on maritime subjects and has visited the Soviet Union as a guest of the Soviet Navy.



units. This class, formerly named after the city of Tbilisi in Soviet Georgia, was given the name *Kuznetsov* after nationalist uprisings in the region. Notably, the new designation is part of the restoration of Admiral Kuznetsov who was Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy when Khrushchev started his cuts. Kuznetsov naturally opposed Khrushchev and was himself cut from the Navy under ignominious circumstances. In 1989, the Soviets commenced sea trials of the first of two units in the *Kuznetsov* class. The second unit of this class, the *Varyag* (formerly named *Riga*, but changed in light of Latvia's drive for independence), is currently fitting out. A third carrier, the *Ul'yanovsk* is under construction and is expected to be 10,000 tons greater in displacement and nuclear-powered.

The relationship between scrapping old units and new construction was admitted to by Fleet Admiral Kapitanets, 1st Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, who revealed to the U.S. Naval Attache to Moscow that the carrier program is made cost effective by the elimination of older units from the fleet.<sup>32</sup> The construction of aircraft carriers has opened up a wide debate on whether they can be justified both economically and strategically. The aircraft carrier debate merits special attention and will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

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<sup>32</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990, 17.

Submarine construction continues at an unabated pace. Except for the halting of the *Typhoon* class SSBN, there are no indications of a slowdown. The Soviets commissioned 9 submarines in 1989, the greatest tonnage produced in any year since 1980.<sup>33</sup> In all, six classes of Soviet submarines are currently under construction. Ten submarines were launched in the Soviet Union in 1990.<sup>34</sup> These included attack subs of the *Victor III*, *Akula*, *Sierra*, and the diesel-powered *Kilo* class as well as the *Delta IV* SSBN and the potentially offensive *Oscar* class SSGN.<sup>35</sup> The cancellation of the *Typhoon* program could mean that more resources are being devoted to the construction of cruise missile and attack submarines. The Severodvinsk shipyard which had produced the *Typhoon* is now a site for the construction of the *Akula* class.<sup>36</sup> It is projected that by 1995 the Soviet SSN fleet will number around 75 units. Of five shipyards in the Soviet Union that specialize in submarine construction, in contrast to only two in the United States, none have been converted to civilian

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<sup>33</sup>Remarks made by Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks at the U.S. Naval Institute ASW Seminar, 27 February 1990.

<sup>34</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, Director of Naval Intelligence, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on intelligence issues, 7 March 1991.

<sup>35</sup>The *Oscar* class SSGN is equipped with 24 300 nautical mile SS-N-19 cruise missiles that are regarded as a formidable threat to Western surface ships.

<sup>36</sup>Norman Polmar, "What Lurks in the Soviet Navy?" *Proceedings*, February 1990: 48. *Delta IV* and *Oscar* class boats are also under construction at this yard.

use.

Soviet commentators and some Western analysts assert that current trends in construction of new ships and submarines are the result of momentum in a planning pipeline that started before Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Current construction rates, therefore, should not be viewed as an indication of how recent changes in military doctrine are being implemented. The CIA attributed increased procurement spending between 1985 and 1987 as the result of weapons programs already on line when Gorbachev came to power.<sup>37</sup> While the 12th Five-Year Plan lasting from 1986 to 1991 was nearly complete in 1985, nothing prevented Gorbachev from ordering a course change and forcing a larger slowdown in naval construction. According to Norman Polmar, author of the *Guide to the Soviet Navy*, current trends in naval construction represent "more than just momentum."<sup>38</sup> One example that tends to contradict the momentum hypothesis is the fact that the *Ul'yanovsk* was laid down in December 1988. If momentum were the only factor driving the Navy's acquisition budget, then indications of a large-scale slowdown should have become evident by, at the latest 1989, given the nominal three-year period it takes to construct a ship or submarine. The continued production of submarines and, to a lesser extent, surface ships are clearly

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<sup>37</sup>Richard F. Kaufman, "Economic Reform and the Soviet Military," *The Washington Quarterly* 11.3 (1988): 205.

<sup>38</sup>Norman Polmar, personal interview, 23 November 1990.

the result of decisions made by the political leadership under Gorbachev.

If substantial cuts in construction are in fact on the Navy's horizon, they can be expected to occur more in the surface fleet than in submarines and naval aircraft. Surface ship building ways can be more easily converted to the construction of merchant vessels. Another reason is that surface ship construction appears to be more expensive and manpower intensive.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps more significant in terms of strategy is the fact the surface ships are becoming more vulnerable to detection from space and are already more vulnerable to attack from modern anti-ship missiles. Two vivid examples of this trend are the British experience in the Falkland Islands conflict and the near-sinking of the USS Stark from an Iraqi Exocet missile. The Soviet Navy is first and foremost a submarine navy and the role of attack and cruise missile submarines is expected to increase as part of a more defensive strategy. Finally, Admiral Chernavin is a submariner by trade and it is very unlikely that he will go along with major cuts in submarine construction.

#### STEADY ON A COURSE OF DEFENSE SUFFICIENCY

At the time of this writing, the Soviet military has had roughly two years since the initial wave of reductions to

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<sup>39</sup>Norman Polmar, "The Soviet Navy: What Will the Navy Pay?" *Proceedings* February 1989: 116.

conduct intensive studies and develop plans on how to restructure the defense budget. Apparently towards the end of this process, Marshal Yazov stated that "major changes will take place in the composition, structure, equipment, and bases of the Navy."<sup>40</sup> Even though many decisions are still in the offing at all levels of military-economic planning and despite abounding uncertainty as to the cohesion of the Soviet state itself, the General Staff has developed a comprehensive program of military reform aimed at sizing individual services at a level commensurate with domestic economic constraints and their overriding strategic importance. In a November 1990 interview in the official Soviet military newspaper *Red Star*, General Moiseyev surprisingly revealed the specifics of this program.

Calling it the "draft concept of military reform," Moiseyev stated that it had been developed by the General Staff in the following dialectical manner:

...in-depth, comprehensive elaboration of all issues associated with transforming defense organizational development. [based on] an analysis of the present-day military-political situation in the world and a long-term scientific forecast of the way it will develop, taking account of the implementation of political, economic and moral reform in society...everything associated with the transformation of the armed forces, their branches, and categories of troops have been

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<sup>40</sup>"Marshal Yazov on Sweeping Changes in USSR Armed Forces and the Resulting Problems," IAN press release in English, 14 September 1990 in FBIS-SOV-90-183, 20 September 1990, 53-54.

carefully studied.<sup>41</sup>

Moiseyev went on to state how the plan would be implemented in three stages with the year 2000 as the target date for the complete restructuring and renewal of the Armed Forces. The first stage lasts until 1994 and consists of implementing nuclear and conventional arms control agreements and a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. In the second stage, 1994 to 1995, it is planned to "basically complete cuts in the USSR armed forces and the formation of a strategic armed forces grouping on Soviet territory." During the third stage, 1996-2000, the plan is to effect a 50% cut in strategic arms and "complete the technical reequipping of the army and naval forces." Based on this plan, cuts in the size of the Soviet Navy will have been completed by 1995. The next logical question concerns the nature of these cuts in funding and force structure for each service. Moiseyev proceeds to answer this question by listing the reductions that are planned for each branch of the Armed Forces in considerable detail, except for the Navy. After giving a series of percentage reductions for the ground forces, air defense troops, and air forces, Moiseyev had the following to say about the Navy:

The composition of...the navy will be *maintained at a*

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<sup>41</sup>M.A. Moiseyev, "Military Reform: Reality and Prospects," an interview, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 20 November 1990, trans. William H.J. Manthorpe, "The Soviet View," *Proceedings* February 1991: 103-104. All subsequent references to the Moiseyev article have been taken from this source.

*level of defense sufficiency* [emphasis added] comparable to the real threat to Soviet interests through the qualitative renewal and improvement of systems and means for command, control, and all kinds of support.

The fact that Moiseyev spared the Navy from any reference to specific reductions is very significant and can be interpreted in one of two ways. According to Captain William H.J. Manthorpe, a former U.S. Naval Attache to the Soviet Union and respected authority on the Soviet Navy, the absence of specific cuts for the Navy suggests that either the proposed military reform program will not alter the Navy's force structure significantly or, despite intensive studies, major decisions have been deferred until the Soviets can make an accurate assessment of developments within the U.S. Navy.

Choosing the first interpretation, it may very well be the case that the Soviets intend to maintain the current level of funding for the Navy and accept a slight reduction in its size because of bloc obsolescence. This projection matches that made in 1989 by Admiral Makarov, the then First Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, who stated that the task for the future is to "improve the qualitative performance of the forces and combat facilities of the fleet with a definite stabilization and *partial reduction* [emphasis added] in their quantitative composition."<sup>42</sup> Makarov's and Moiseyev's statements make it clear that the Soviet Navy will

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<sup>42</sup>K.V. Makarov, "The Oceans are Conquered by the Courageous," *Voyennyye Znaniya*, No. 7 (1989), trans. Leon Goure', "The Soviet Strategic Review," *Strategic Review* Winter (1990): 82.

not receive additional funding in the future. Both seem to suggest that in the long-term the Navy will be funded at a consistent level relative to other branches of the Armed Forces.

The first interpretation also matches projections made by two prominent U.S. analysts. Theodore M. Neely, Assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence for Soviet Analysis, states that cuts in the defense budget will not affect the Soviet Navy disproportionately.<sup>43</sup> According to Neely, the Navy is viewed by the political and military leadership, along with the Strategic Rocket Forces and the Army, as one of the three essential armed forces and this makes it unlikely that it will be the recipient of drastic reductions. Along the same lines, Norman Polmar foresees the Navy getting the same number of rubles as before *perestroika*.<sup>44</sup> Polmar states that it is quite possible that the Navy will be the only service funded at roughly the same level in the future, a prediction that correlates with Moiseyev's "draft concept of military reform."

As for the 'wait and see' option, it is known that the U.S. Navy has rewritten the Maritime Strategy to adjust for the improvements in superpower relations of the late 1980s. However, this document has not been officially released by the Chief of Naval Operations. This may be what the Soviets are waiting for, a toned-down version of the Maritime Strategy so

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<sup>43</sup>Theodore M. Neely, personal interview, 16 November 1990.

<sup>44</sup>Norman Polmar, personal interview, 23 November 1990.



that they can start reducing the size and adjusting the strategy of their Navy.

So it appears that economic constraints themselves will not force the Soviet Navy to alter course to a large degree in the 1990s. By the way that it has so far avoided major cuts in funding and resources, carefully gone about defending institutional interests in the face of challenges to its current level of funding, managed constraints through scrapping and a reduced deployment schedule so as to continue acquiring new units with few slowdowns, and, most importantly, was left relatively untouched by the General Staff's publicized military reform program, it appears that the Soviet Navy is holding steady on a course of defense sufficiency in terms of its development over the next ten years.

All of this, of course, bodes well for the Navy's roles and missions as part of an evolving and more defensive military strategy. Economic constraints will only affect the Navy so far as it can sacrifice resources without degrading its warfighting capabilities. The remarks of one Soviet naval officer are helpful in this instance. In a 1982 article in *Morskoi Sbornik*, Captain B. Makeyev writes that economic constraints do have an impact on the development of the Navy, but only on missions deemed to be "secondary" in importance.<sup>45</sup> According to Makeyev, there are certain

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<sup>45</sup>Captain 1st Rank B. Makeyev, "Some Views on the Theory of Naval Weaponry," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 4 (1982): 27-29.

"vital" missions that must be performed whatever the cost. It will be the task of the current Navy leadership led by Admiral Chernavin to articulate vital strategic missions for the Navy during the current state of flux in Soviet military strategy. Also, the Navy's share of a shrinking budget will be largely determined based on the perceived threat coming from the United States Navy. The next two chapters will address these topics on the way to projecting the probable strategic missions of a Soviet Navy that will no doubt remain a formidable oceangoing force towards the year 2000.

## CHAPTER THREE

## Gorshkov's Legacy and Chernavin's Inheritance

The strategic direction of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000 depends greatly on the man at the helm, Admiral of the Fleet Vladimir Nikolayevich Chernavin. Until 1985, Admiral Gorshkov had steered the Navy on a course of swift modernization and a greatly expanded role withi Soviet strategy, developments often misconstrued as a campaign to establish "independent" missions for the fleet. Now that the "father of the modern Soviet Navy" has passed away leaving a legacy that, on the surface, seems incompatible with new doctrinal requirements, and the relatively young and politically astute Chernavin has inherited his post, the question arises as to whether this change of command will be a decisive factor altering the strategic direction of the Navy during the current period of reform. Though Chernavin has eschewed the public and forceful methods of Gorshkov's advocacy and put more emphasis on combined arms strategy, he does not represent, as some analysts assert, a return to a reduced and subordinate role for the Navy. Admiral Chernavin's vision for the Navy is certainly his own, but involves only slight changes to the course steered by Gorshkov.

The purpose of this section is to identify the course

changes that are a part of Chernavin's new strategic vision as well as the important continuities from the Gorshkov era. This analysis will involve a comparison of the two men based mainly on what they have written. The issue is not so much Gorshkov himself, but the policy that he represents and the legacy that remains in the minds of those who will sail the Soviet Navy into the 1990s. Gorshkov will be remembered for his efforts at building the world's second largest navy for the purpose of challenging Western sea supremacy and furthering the cause of world communism. He represents big navy thinking which, in the Soviet Union of 1991, is criticized as "old thinking." Admiral Chernavin is steering without Gorshkov's same purposes. Though he does not represent small navy thinking, Chernavin is part of a trend toward a smaller, more potent Navy oriented mainly for operations in waters near Soviet territory.

It should be recognized that just as there is a potential disconnect between a "defensive" doctrine and actual strategy, the same is possible between Gorshkov's association with unpopular political goals and his very relevant and basic strategic views. So the first step will be to identify what were Gorshkov's main strategic views. Gorshkov was helpful in this respect having laid out his views rather boldly in a number of published works. Next, Chernavin's record will be analyzed in order to determine the main differences and continuities from the Gorshkov era. Finally, both will be

placed back in the context of the contrasting environments in which Gorshkov prospered and that Chernavin must now weather.

#### SAILING DIRECTIONS

Besides the balanced fleet that has sailed into the 1990s, Gorshkov's legacy exists in his many writings. Admiral Gorshkov chose the written word as one of his main weapons in trying to secure an expanded role for the Navy. Several works written under his name will, to a certain extent, serve as sailing directions for developing the Navy's future missions.

Admiral Gorshkov's first major effort came in 1972 with an eleven article series in *Morskoi Sbornik* collectively entitled "Navies in War and Peace." While much of this series dealt with the history of "Russia's difficult road to the sea" and the Navy's experiences during the Great Patriotic War, Gorshkov does establish his argument that, in the future, broad-based Soviet maritime power is needed in order to ensure the economic and military security of the state. Expecting resistance from the start, Gorshkov was careful to base his argument on the "correct" interpretation of history:

...opponents of Russian seapower have widely used and are widely using falsification of its military history. In particular they assert that all of Russia's victories have been gained only by the Army and that it can be powerful only by strengthening the Army at the expense of the Navy.<sup>1</sup>

Gorshkov extended the range of his argument in 1976 with the

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<sup>1</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, "Navies in War and Peace," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 3 (1972): 20, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

publishing of *The Sea Power of the State*, a polished version of the *Morskoi Sbornik* series directed more towards other services and the political leadership. In this book, the military leadership was criticized for its preoccupation with continental theaters of military operations and its neglect of the Navy's potential contribution to victory through actions in the oceanic theaters. There were evidently some important supporters of *The Sea Power of the State* judging from the fact that its publishing coincided with the opening of the 25th Party Congress in March 1976.<sup>2</sup>

A second edition of *The Sea Power of the State* was published in 1979 apparently in response to criticism from within the ranks that Gorshkov had charted an independent course for the Navy, the equivalent of a cardinal sin among Soviet generals and politicians already suspicious of sailors who venture at great distances from the homeland. All references to naval science as a distinct form of military science were stricken from the second edition and a chapter titled "The Strategic Employment of the Navy" was added emphasizing the importance of unified strategy and combined arms operations. Admiral Gorshkov made it clear in this chapter that no service can be an "absolute sovereign" in a particular sphere of warfare and that the "division of strategy as a science into land and naval strategy is both

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<sup>2</sup>Michael McGwire, *Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1987) 470.

unnatural and harmful in the respect that it deepens the estrangement between the army and the navy."<sup>3</sup>

Before discussing the strategic concepts outlined in these early works, it is necessary to place Gorshkov's views within the overall system of Soviet military thought. Was he speaking with authority on military doctrine or expressing the goals and ambitions of the Navy leadership in the context of military science? For the purpose of this study and in agreement with the mainstream of Soviet naval analysis, Gorshkov's writings will be treated as an authoritative elaboration of the military doctrine of his time period and as sources of much that is enduring in Soviet naval strategy.<sup>4</sup> In his major books and articles, Admiral Gorshkov presented the Navy's missions in accordance with the principles of official military doctrine. Many of his new ideas were subsequently incorporated into national strategy. This is not to say that all of the policies advocated by Gorshkov eventually came to fruition as they were written and had the support of other services or the entire Politburo, only that Gorshkov's position and the fact that he was allowed to

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<sup>3</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, 2nd Ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979) 326, 322.

<sup>4</sup>After detailed linguistic analysis of the literature, James M. McConnell of the Center for Naval Analyses concluded that Gorshkov was writing authoritatively. As part of his argument, McConnell states that Gorshkov employed a third branch of Soviet military thought that, while having the style of military science, deals with "concrete expressions of doctrine." See Stephen M. Walt, *Analysts in War and Peace: McGwire, McConnell, and Admiral Gorshkov* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, 1987) 3; 1-7.

publish such a large amount of material confers an official status to his writings.

The central theme of "Navies in War and Peace" and *The Sea Power of the State* was that for the Soviet Union to remain a great power it must be a capable sea power. In a broad sense, Admiral Gorshkov can be considered a Mahanist in that he sought to support his views on the need for a large navy with historical evidence and the notion that command of the seas is an essential component of state security. With an argument reminiscent of early 20th century American naval development, he declares:

Our state - a great continental and land power - at all stages of its history has needed a powerful fleet as an essential constituent of the armed forces. The need to have a potent navy is in keeping with the geographical position of our country and its political significance as a great world power has for long been clear.<sup>5</sup>

Gorshkov cites the postwar alignment of maritime nations against the Soviet Union as well as new technological capabilities of the fleet to counter this threat as reasons for elevating the Navy from a secondary to a primary role in Soviet strategy. Additionally, the Navy is presented as being uniquely capable of furthering state interests in peacetime as an instrument of foreign policy.

For most of the Gorshkov era the focus was on building an empire with the Navy as one of the tools. His writings came at a time of Soviet interest in overseas meddling. The Navy

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<sup>5</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, 2nd. ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979) 154.



was an attractive means of statecraft in the effort to accelerate the objective forces of world communism. Admiral Gorshkov effectively related sea power to this task:

For the Soviet Union, the main goal of whose policy is the building of communism and a steady rise in the welfare of its builders, sea power emerges as one of the important factors for strengthening its economy, accelerating scientific and technical development and consolidating the economic, political, cultural and scientific links of the Soviet people with the peoples and countries friendly to it.<sup>6</sup>

Much like the British empire and the importance of the Royal Navy, the Soviets sought an increase in maritime power to bind together the forces of socialism in friendly nations and further the cause in other areas where it had not already taken root. For the most part this meant the supporting of communist forces in the Third World. Unlike the Army, the Soviet Navy could support "wars of national liberation" in such a way as to minimize political and economic costs. Visits of Soviet warships to foreign countries were said to serve as shining examples of the kind of prosperity that could be achieved through socialism.

Gorshkov's argument for a powerful fleet should not be viewed as an attempt to define an independent naval strategy. This charge was the criticism of convenience for the Navy's opponents in other services and has led to the same general impression of Gorshkov in the West. He called for an increase

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<sup>6</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, trans. Pergamon Press Ltd. (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1979) 1-2. Unless otherwise specified, citations from *The Sea Power of the State* are taken from this translation.

in the Navy's role in a unified military strategy and for recognition from the ground forces as an equal partner. At least as early as 1966, Gorshkov showed support for a single and unified approach.<sup>7</sup> He does imply, though, that the fleet has an independent contribution to make on an operational scale that will lead to the fulfillment of larger combined missions such as winning the land war or destroying the enemy's military-economic potential.

The only truly independent aspect of Gorshkov's writings is the clarification of a separate Naval Art based on the Navy's unique operating environment and hardware requirements.<sup>8</sup> All criticism aside, Gorshkov is careful to make the point that he is seeking a greater role for the Navy within the context of a unified military strategy.

In *The Sea Power of the State*, Gorshkov divides the Navy's missions into two general categories, fleet against shore and fleet against fleet, with the former category given higher priority. The preeminence of fleet against shore operations is conditioned by the addition of nuclear weapons to the Navy's arsenal. As part of what the Soviets term the "revolution in military affairs," the fleet assumed the mission of delivering nuclear strikes from high endurance

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<sup>7</sup>See S.G. Gorshkov, "The 23rd Congress of the KPSS and the Tasks of Navymen," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 5 (1966): 3-13, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>8</sup>See the section "Problems of Naval Art," in *The Sea Power of the State* 213-277.

nuclear-powered submarines and long-range aircraft. In the words of Gorshkov:

Today, a fleet operating against the shore is able not only to solve the tasks connected with territorial changes but to directly influence the course and even the outcome of a war. In this connection the operations of a fleet against the shore have assumed paramount importance in armed conflict at sea, governing the technical policy of building a fleet and the development of naval art.<sup>9</sup>

In Soviet terminology, actions designated as having an impact on the "course" and "outcome" of war constitute an essential strategic mission. This phrasing is a clear indication of the Navy's claim to a primary strategic role.

Fleet against fleet missions are characterized by operations aimed at securing "sea dominance" or the "creation of conditions promoting the successful conduct by the fleets of operations at sea and by the sea fronts on land."<sup>10</sup> Sea dominance is achieved primarily through conventional operations as a necessary prerequisite for accomplishing the more important mission of striking enemy territory. For example, the Soviets concentrate on using general purpose forces to maintain control of the uppermost portion of the North Atlantic and the Barents Sea as part of their strategy of shielding ballistic missile submarines from Western ASW forces. Commenting on the scope of fleet against fleet operations, Gorshkov stated that the nature of U.S. SSBN

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<sup>9</sup>Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 221.

<sup>10</sup>Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 229-234.

deployments makes the task of locating and sinking them, however difficult, a global mission.<sup>11</sup> Emphasis is also placed in this category on cooperation with ground forces through anti-landing operations and the interdiction of NATO sea communications.

Another important concept defined by Gorshkov that is at the center of the current debate over the future size of the fleet is that of a "balanced fleet." By design, only a balanced fleet can perform the types of missions listed above. Gorshkov's vision of a balanced fleet has strong connotations of global capability as he indicates in the following passage:

an ocean-going fleet capable of making powerful attacks against the ground installations and distributions of an aggressor's naval forces operating in any region of the world's oceans.<sup>12</sup>

The implication here is that a balanced fleet is capable of operating for extended periods of time on a global scale. Also, a balanced fleet is not necessarily strong in all categories of naval hardware. In the introductory remarks of the section in *The Sea Power of the State* on balancing the fleet, Gorshkov defines this concept as the "most advantageous combination" of naval forces and stresses the development of submarines and aviation with little emphasis on surface

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<sup>11</sup>Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 223.

<sup>12</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, "The Experience of the Great Patriotic War and the Present Stage in the Development of the Naval Art," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 4 (1985): 19, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

ships.<sup>13</sup> Numerical parity with the United States in numbers of submarines, surface ships, and aircraft is not essential for a balanced fleet. But more importantly, this concept may require numerical superiority in certain categories as seen in the three to one numerical Soviet advantage in attack submarines. The implication is that a smaller but properly balanced fleet is more capable than a much larger unbalanced fleet.

In summary, the objective necessity of a powerful navy, equal partnership with other armed forces, and a balanced fleet oriented towards strikes against the shore with the conventional capability to secure sea dominance are the elements of Gorshkov's legacy that will exert a guiding influence on the future strategic employment of the Navy. Admiral Gorshkov's writings, though seemingly out of phase with New Political Thinking, provide much of the foundation for future Soviet naval strategy. Citing *The Sea Power of the State* and other works lends authority to the Navy's argument for the continued support of its traditional missions within the framework of a defensive doctrine.

The appearance in 1988 of the book *The Navy: Its Role, Prospects for Development, and Employment* written by three officers closely associated with Gorshkov deserves separate treatment because of questions concerning its authoritativeness. In the true Gorshkov tradition, Rear

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<sup>13</sup>Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 253.

Admiral V'yunenko along with Captains 1st Rank Makeyev and Skugarev have put together a book that extols the value of a powerful fleet to the Soviet future and sets forth a new mission structure that stresses nuclear warfighting and, as its first priority, an extended defense of the homeland. The book is clearly based on 'big navy' thinking. While *The Navy*, as it will be referred to hereafter, reaffirms the fleet's role in "joint action with ground troops in continental theaters of military operations," it focuses more on independent operations in oceanic theaters.<sup>14</sup> It is intended not only for military officers, but for a "wide range of readers interested in the status, history, and of course the future of today's navy."<sup>15</sup> *The Navy* came at a crucial point in the development of the 13th Five-Year Plan (1991-1995) and is intended mainly to educate decision makers.

Admiral Gorshkov wrote the foreword to *The Navy* and is said to have supervised the rest of the project. His endorsement does carry with it a certain degree of authority among Soviet military thinkers. However, it is quite possible that he exercised only cursory oversight in what were his last days. The fact that work on *The Navy* was begun in 1984 and was completed in the middle of 1987 accounts for its deficiency in addressing directly the doctrinal changes made

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<sup>14</sup>Rear Admiral N.P. V'yunenko et. al., *The Navy: Its Role, Prospects for Development, and Employment* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988) 261, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>15</sup>V'yunenko et. al. 10.

after its release.<sup>16</sup> *The Navy* is, however, relevant in its forecast of future missions and its analysis of the current technological and defensive trends affecting the fleet.

V'yunenکو et. al. describe three major missions that are of "vital importance to the state."<sup>17</sup> In first place is the mission of "repelling enemy aerospace attacks" involving an active defense of the Soviet periphery against ballistic and cruise missiles as well as long-range bombers and carrier strike aircraft. This mission stresses action in the initial period of war with forward ASW operations against Western SSBNs and strikes against aircraft carriers and nuclear-capable surface ships. Apparently using the Strategic Defense Initiative and the views of "American specialists" as surrogates, the authors envision the Navy employing sea and space-based lasers and particle beam weapons to destroy missiles already on their flight path. Judging from the kinds of forces involved and the scope of their employment, the authors view the task of repelling an enemy aerospace attack as an extended defense of the homeland with the outer perimeter moved further out to sea because of the nature of modern weapons.

Nuclear warfighting receives heavy emphasis in *The Navy*. The second vital mission is the "suppressing of the enemy's

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<sup>16</sup>Michael McGwire, "Gorshkov's Navy," *Proceedings* September 1989: 44.

<sup>17</sup>V'yunenکو, *The Navy* 27-33.

military-economic potential" mainly through coordinated strikes from SSBNs and cruise missile carriers. The Navy's SSBN force is said to hold an advantage over land-based missiles in that it is capable of launching strikes from "all directions."<sup>18</sup> It is symbolic that this mission is put in second place in light of Gorshkov's first priority for fleet against the shore operations.

Gorshkov's requirement for sea dominance assumes third place under the title of "destroying enemy force groupings." The fleet is to support the ground campaign by gaining control of the flanks through mainly anti-carrier operations and amphibious landings in key locations such as the entrance to the Baltic or Kurile islands.

To support these missions the authors place heavy emphasis on expected advances in the fleet's technological capabilities. Hoping to skip a step in the dialectic of technological change, they describe submarines capable of reaching speeds of up to 100 knots and diving to 6000 feet. Ironically, water-jet propulsion drives for submarines similar to those described in Tom Clancy's *Hunt for Red October* are listed as a possible development.<sup>19</sup> Also mentioned are ASW and AAW dirigibles and advanced cruise missiles. Though reading more like science fiction than military science, these

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<sup>18</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 40.

<sup>19</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 90-91; Tom Clancy, *The Hunt For Red October* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1984) 234.



projections show the extent to which naval thinkers expect to reap the benefits of technological advances in industry, a view that correlates well with the *peredyshka* concept.

Individually, the missions set forth in the V'yunenکو book represent little that is not already an part of Soviet naval strategy. In the words of analyst Theodore M. Neely:

The Navy repackages Soviet naval missions to fit in the new defensive doctrine box, but the jaded Western consumer will see that there indeed is nothing new, merely a reemphasis of long-held missions and force justification arguments.<sup>20</sup>

However, what is significant about *The Navy* is the reordering of the Navy's basic missions and whether the book can be considered as an authoritative source for the development of strategy. Based on the lukewarm reviews it has received in military circles, the chances are slim that the Navy will serve as a guide for the Navy leadership, but it is a valuable source for a range of ideas on how to equip the fleet towards the year 2000.<sup>21</sup> Of particular relevance is *The Navy's* treatment of the primary mission of repelling enemy aerospace attacks.

When asked about the V'yunenکو book in his 1989 interview in *Proceedings*, Admiral Chernavin commented that the authors

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<sup>20</sup>Theodore M. Neely, rev. of *The Navy: Its Role, Prospects for Development and Employment*, V'yunenکو et. al., *Proceedings* January 1989: 124.

<sup>21</sup>Michael MccGwire, an established authority on the Soviet Navy, states that there is no reason to suggest that *The Navy* represents a reordering of Soviet naval missions. See Michael MccGwire, "The Soviet Navy and World War," in Gillete and Frank 214-215.

have "set down their opinion regarding the main strategic tasks of tomorrow, which may be of interest to a certain group of readers."<sup>22</sup> Hardly an enthusiastic response from Chernavin for a book endorsed by his legendary predecessor. He described *The Navy* as "opinion," a clear reference to military science. Though it may be scientifically correct, *The Navy*, by advocating ambitious naval development, is not politically correct given new doctrinal requirements. Admiral Chernavin implies that the book does not represent the official views of the Navy leadership. It is possible that Chernavin views *The Navy* as an example of "old thinking" or he may wish to preserve an element of deniability if it should become clearly incompatible with the General Staff's conception of the Navy's role.

Chernavin's reading of *The Navy* squares with other evidence of less than favorable reviews within the military. Apparently encountering resistance from the start, it took nearly a year for *The Navy* to make it past military censors.<sup>23</sup> First hand evidence is provided by British author and analyst Geoffrey Till who notes that in his many conversations with Soviet officials and naval analysts they will either deny knowledge of the V'yunenko book, dismiss it as out of date, or state that it is only an interesting

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<sup>22</sup>"Chernavin Responds," *Proceedings* February 1989: 75-76.

<sup>23</sup>Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks, "A Nuclear War-Fighting Treatise," *Proceedings* May 1989: 136.

addition to military science.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Admiral Amelko, a former Deputy Chief of the General Staff in the early 1980s, has criticized *The Navy* as outdated and recommended that it be dismissed as a source for determining the Navy's strategic direction.

On the whole, it is safest to treat the V'yunenkov book as existing somewhere between pure and detached military science and the official and informed views of the Navy leadership. There is a great deal of analysis and forecasting in *The Navy* relevant to the projected missions of the fleet under a defensive doctrine. It also is valuable as a source of at least a segment of the views of the Soviet Navy establishment that could become prominent in the event of a full-blown conservative resurgence within the Soviet government. On another level, the book serves as a target in many of the debates involving the *institutchiki* and political leadership over the Navy's future role. Lastly, and if for no other reason, *The Navy* should be taken seriously as one of the last expressions of the Gorshkov legacy.

#### CHERNAVIN AT THE HELM

Today's Naval Commander must have the qualities of an experienced politician, the willpower of a hardened fighter, the breadth of knowledge of a scientist and the patience of a teacher. At all times he must be a Bolshevik and a Leninist. Such a man is Admiral

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<sup>24</sup>Geoffrey Till, "Present and Future Roles of the Soviet Navy," in *Royal United Services Institute and Brassey's Defence Yearbook 1990* (London: Brassey's, 1990) 282.

Chernavin.<sup>25</sup>

Though Leninism may be out of style, this description which appeared in *Red Star* in 1981 lists traits that are perhaps more in demand now in the early 1990s amidst the uncertain waters of military reform and restructuring. Admiral Chernavin brings to the post of Commander-in-Chief a style that is distinctively different from his predecessor. He has kept a relatively lower profile than Gorshkov, choosing not to make the same published appeal to level one decision makers for continued funding.

Admiral Chernavin is best described as a traditional Soviet patriot and Party loyalist. His father, an officer in the Northern Fleet, died in World War II, and this led Chernavin to enter the prestigious Frunze Academy in Leningrad in 1947 as a naval cadet. Since then, he has spent almost his entire career in the Northern Fleet serving on a number of submarines there and in 1962 leading the first Soviet submarine expedition under the Arctic.<sup>26</sup> As Commander of the Northern Fleet from 1977-81, Chernavin emphasized political themes in his speeches and writings earning the reputation as an outstanding Party worker. He served as Gorshkov's Deputy and Chief of the Main Naval Staff before being promoted in 1985.

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<sup>25</sup>*Krasnaya zvezda* 1981, quoted in *Gorbachev: The path to power*, by Christian Schmidt-Hauer (London: I.B. Tauris, 1986) 168.

<sup>26</sup>"Chernavin-the new C-in-C of the Soviet Navy," *Janes Defence Weekly* 18 January 1986: 61.

A critical factor in charting the course of the Soviet Navy is to determine any differences and similarities between the strategic views of Chernavin and Gorshkov. Such a comparison can be distilled down to two subtle differences and two noteworthy continuities.

#### COMBINED ARMS AND COMBAT READINESS

The first subtle difference is in the area of combined arms strategy. In the opinion of many officials in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Navy under the command of Gorshkov had been on a heading somewhat to the right of the sacrosanct combined arms philosophy. For reasons of strategic correctness and economic expediency, Admiral Chernavin appears to have been chosen to bring the Navy back on track. "Chernavin's appointment as Gorshkov's successor confirms the swing of the Russian compass to its fixed and natural continental setting," comments one analyst.<sup>27</sup> In the opinion of another, British hardware analyst John Jordan, the change of command signals an abrupt end to the Gorshkov era:

The appointment of Chernavin to succeed Gorshkov represents a return to the traditional Soviet school of naval strategy. Chernavin has reaffirmed the combined arms approach to naval operations. He has 'reined in' the large-scale ocean exercises favored by Gorshkov.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Peter Tsouras, "Soviet Naval Strategy," in *The Soviet Naval Threat to Europe*, eds. Bruce W. and Susan M. Watson (Boulder: Westview, 1989) 18.

<sup>28</sup>John Jordan, "The Soviet Navy 1990-2010: a commentary," in Pay and Till 164.

These conclusions, while based on solid evidence of sharp reductions in the Navy's OPTEMPO and Chernavin's known penchant for combined arms, are too extreme in their characterization of the current Navy line. As compared to Admiral Gorshkov, Chernavin does place greater emphasis on combined arms operations and the requirements of a unified military strategy, but this should be viewed more as an objective recommitment rather than a forced return to small navy strategy.

It is important to note that Chernavin would not have become Commander-in-Chief without Gorshkov's full support. His views on the Navy's role in a unified strategy are not all that different from his predecessor's. Commenting in the Gorshkovian tradition, he makes the following assertion:

Enhancing the effectiveness of warfare at sea requires the joint efforts of all branches of the armed forces with the Navy playing the decisive role [emphasis added].<sup>29</sup>

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of Gorshkov's birth in March 1990, Chernavin notes that Gorshkov challenged the views on the role of the Navy contained in the widely read book *Military Strategy* edited by Marshal Sokolovsky. Quoting Gorshkov's criticism of the book as portraying the Navy as "the Soviet Army's helper," Chernavin conveniently adds,

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<sup>29</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 9 (1986): 30, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center; Gorshkov makes this same point in his chapter on the strategic employment of the Navy in the second edition of the *Sea Power of the State* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979) 308-317.

"Unfortunately, adherents of this opinion also exist today."<sup>30</sup> While there are many indications such as these of a strong continuity in strategic views from Gorshkov to Chernavin, a subtle difference becomes apparent with respect to Chernavin's much greater concentration on combined arms strategy. A brief look at Chernavin's past, his experiences as a submariner and views on the status of naval art, helps to clarify his position.

Admiral Chernavin's operational experience is a significant factor that will likely influence the fleet to assume a more integrated role in Soviet strategy. At the forefront of operations involving Northern Fleet submarines as a commanding officer and later as fleet commander, Chernavin gained an appreciation for operational autonomy under a unified strategic command. He was intimately involved with SSBN operations determining their specific operational profiles and tactics while still subject to the direct command and control of the land-based Strategic Rocket Forces.<sup>31</sup> Here Chernavin learned that it was still possible for the Navy to operate independently and remain an integrated part of a national strategy. Other experiences included the *Zapad-81* exercise in which the largest naval landing in Soviet history was conducted. The Northern Fleet under the command of

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<sup>30</sup>"Chernavin Commemorates 80th Anniversary of Gorshkov's Birth," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 3 (1990), trans. JPRS-UMA-90-009, 13 April 1990, 54.

<sup>31</sup>*Janes Defence Weekly* 18 January 1986: 61.

Chernavin played the dominant role in these landings. Admiral Chernavin's experiences with SSBNs and large amphibious landings have apparently convinced him of the importance and advantages of integrating the fleet with the actions of other armed forces.

Starting in April 1981, a debate took place in *Morskoi Sbornik* over the status of the theory of the Navy. Chernavin's involvement in this debate provides a valuable insight into his strategic viewpoint. The lead article, "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and the Employment of the Navy," by Vice Admiral Stalbo, a prominent naval theoretician and confidant of Gorshkov, drew strong criticism from Chernavin who at the time was Gorshkov's deputy. Wasting no time, Chernavin wrote in the second article of the series that Stalbo's views were deficient in addressing certain categories of the theory of the Navy, most notably in the area of combined arms operations. As Chief of the Main Navy Staff, Chernavin seemed to argue that the Navy had gone too far in defining its own approach to strategy:

Today...there are no purely specific realms of warfare. Victory is achieved by the combined efforts of all branches of the armed forces which brings about the need to integrate all knowledge of warfare within the framework of a unified military science.<sup>32</sup>

The connection here is that a single unified military science is needed in order to chart the combined arms missions of the

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<sup>32</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "On Naval Theory," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1982): 21, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.



fleet. According to Chernavin, an independent naval art is inappropriate for the task of integrating the Navy with the actions of other services. He also states in reference to Stalbo's article that there is "not yet any unanimity on this subject," a severe criticism when it is realized that a scientifically-based unity of views is a source of pride for Soviet military theoreticians.<sup>33</sup> While it does not constitute a major disagreement over the Navy's traditional missions, Admiral Chernavin's courage in criticizing Stalbo, and by extension Gorshkov, does indicate how strongly he is committed to seeing the Navy operate according to the combined arms philosophy.

The recommitment to combined arms operations under Chernavin is not a factor of weakness, but one of overall strength. There is no reason to view this development as automatically harmful to the Soviet Navy's institutional interests. It is very likely that the reverse is true, that the Navy will prosper under an evolving defensive strategy if it can work in conjunction with other branches of the Armed Forces, especially in light of economic constraints facing the whole military. The Navy would definitely not benefit from a more detached strategy, for it would surely fall prey to the traditional leverage of the Soviet Army and Strategic Rocket Forces. This may explain why Chernavin and the rest of the

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<sup>33</sup>Chernavin, "On Naval Theory," 21; See Robert C. Suggs, "The Soviet Navy: Changing of the Guard," *Proceedings* April 1983: 36-42.

Navy leadership support a unified approach so strongly.

The second difference in Chernavin's strategic vision is the priority that he accords the requirement for combat readiness. Admiral Chernavin has made combat readiness his first priority over other categories of naval art. In his first comprehensive article as Commander-in-Chief, Chernavin places a great deal of emphasis on preparing the fleets for action at a moment's notice.<sup>34</sup> The level of combat readiness is measured by:

the number of fully manned and trained operational formations, tactical formations, and ships, and their ability in a given period of time to begin fulfilling tasks.<sup>35</sup>

Chernavin calls for higher standards of training and maintenance in order to improve combat readiness. This is a significant change from the Gorshkov era where the scope of the conflict was of primary concern. However, as compared to Gorshkov, this is just a shift in priority rather than a change in content.<sup>36</sup> Two reasons, one economic and the other

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<sup>34</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 9 (1986): 26-33, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>35</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," 27.

<sup>36</sup>See Floyd D. Kennedy, "Chernavin Emphasizes Combat Readiness, Mutual Support in His First Comprehensive Article on Categories of Naval Art," in *Soviet Military Press Highlights* Vol. 1 No. 1 (1986): 11-16; Chernavin's list: combat readiness, surprise, mutual support, maneuver, time, the battle, strike. Gorshkov held to the following list in *The Sea Power of the State*: scope of the conflict, the strike, the battle, mutual support, maneuver, swiftness, time, and command of the sea. Sequences usually indicate priorities in Soviet military literature; See V.N.

strategic, point to why Chernavin has chosen to stress combat readiness.

Higher standards of combat readiness are being emphasized in all of the Soviet armed forces and are a logical requirement of reasonable sufficiency doctrine. Whereas Gorshkov had the luxury of a steady supply of newer units, Admiral Chernavin is faced with a stagnant Soviet economy and bloc obsolescence. Chernavin hopes to counter these unfavorable trends with one of his own, improved combat readiness. Readiness, he hopes, will absorb cuts in the defense budget and preserve the fleet's capabilities. A larger percentage of naval forces that stand ready in port can, to a certain extent, offset disadvantages in numbers and experience at sea. Also, improving the readiness of the fleet creates the image that it is making the most of every ruble and serves as reason not to make further reductions in the Navy's budget.

The second motivation concerns the nature of modern weapons and the decreased time which the Navy will have to react to a surprise attack. Combat readiness is a theme that runs throughout Chernavin's analysis of other categories of naval art, mainly the element of surprise and the time factor. He states that surprise attacks have been made easier with the development of "medium and long range cruise missiles" and

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Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 9 (1986): 26-33.

radioelectronic warfare.<sup>37</sup> Citing a universal trend, he makes the point that the time in which naval forces have to react has shortened greatly. The time factor is, of course, inseparable from surprise and both point towards the need to improve combat readiness. In the following two passages, Admiral Chernavin relates these factors to the need for improved combat readiness:

The fleets are performing extensive work to comply with norms of maintaining forces in constant readiness, to keep them at the appropriate technical level, and to further reduce time periods for placing them in readiness for immediate actions. The factor of time is assuming greater significance than ever before. A delayed reaction to a situation change and indecisiveness in command and control reduce the effectiveness of using the tactical capabilities of forces.<sup>38</sup>

The growing demand to shorten the length of time required to accomplish missions on any scale has led to a requirement to keep naval forces at the level of readiness needed to immediately repel any aggression.<sup>39</sup>

Such an emphasis on combat readiness is significant because only two branches of the Soviet Armed Forces, the Air Defense Forces and the Strategic Rocket Forces, are maintained at a level of readiness needed to "immediately repel any

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<sup>37</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," 29.

<sup>38</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Prepare Yourself for Modern Warfare," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1989): 4, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center; See also Chernavin, "The Navy and the 27th CPSU Congress," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1986): 3-11; Chernavin, "Guarding the Homeland's Sea Frontiers," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 7 (1986): 4-5.

<sup>39</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," 31.

aggression."<sup>40</sup> Chernavin would like to see this change with a large numbers of naval forces kept at a higher readiness level.

#### A BALANCED FLEET AND AN EXTENDED DEFENSE PERIMETER

The first of two major continuities is Chernavin's conception of a balanced fleet. In an ever worsening economic situation, the possibility of an improperly balanced fleet is not a course that Chernavin is likely to steer without first trying to check cuts in acquisition with more flexible alternatives.<sup>41</sup> His definition of a balanced fleet closely resembles Gorshkov's:

Only a modern navy capable of accomplishing a wide range of missions in naval warfare and conducting combat actions in all spheres simultaneously...has the capability of fulfilling this [repel aggression]. General purpose forces, and above all submarines, which in coordination with surface combatants, naval aviation and other branches of the Armed Forces can significantly reduce the threat of strikes...from maritime sectors.<sup>42</sup>

Chernavin is expected, given his background, to continue to view a balanced fleet as long on submarines and aviation and short on surface ships. After pointing out the decisive role of submarines, Chernavin states that surface ships are "intended mainly for the defense of our sea boundaries, lanes,

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<sup>40</sup>F.D. Kennedy, "Chernavin Emphasizes Combat Readiness, Mutual Support in His First Comprehensive Article on Naval Art," 14.

<sup>41</sup>See the section on managing economic constraints, Chapter 2, pages 40-52.

<sup>42</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Prepare Yourself for Modern Warfare," 3-4.

and coast."<sup>43</sup> The fact that Chernavin is expected to rely mainly on submarines and aircraft is not so much something that has been inherited from Gorshkov, but rather is an enduring element of Soviet naval theory dating back to the 1930s.

Admiral Chernavin's concept of a balanced fleet presents a special set of difficulties in the bringing the Navy into line with new doctrinal requirements. This is important for two reasons. First, balancing of the fleet according to the "most advantageous combination of forces" has become mired in the confusion over how to implement reasonable sufficiency doctrine. What may be most advantageous in terms of naval strategy may not be so in terms of economics. Secondly, a balanced fleet oriented towards submarines and aircraft presents serious difficulties in adapting to a defensive doctrine. Nuclear submarines, especially SSGNs, and strike aircraft like the *Backfire* bomber represent significant offensive potential. Their method of employment is to penetrate enemy defenses to launch their weapons. Though vulnerable to attack, surface combatants are readily observable and meant, as Chernavin stated, to defend to the Soviet periphery from home waters. Unless he meant diesel submarines and maritime patrol aircraft, Chernavin seems to want to retain at least the option of offensive operations. At this point, the amount of exercise data is insufficient to

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<sup>43</sup>"Chernavin Responds," 76.

draw clear-cut conclusions. Admiral Chernavin apparently has a vision, albeit cloudy, of what a balanced fleet should look like. The question is whether he will be allowed to build it in light of new doctrinal requirements. It will take at least another five to seven years before a "sufficient" answer to this question becomes apparent in the course of the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot*.

The second continuity is for the Navy to develop an extended defense perimeter around the sea approaches to Soviet territory. Chernavin's reasoning in support of an extended defense perimeter is very similar to Gorshkov's. It was the development of nuclear strike systems during the Gorshkov era that occasioned the Navy's break from its previous coastal orientation. Though the primary motivation was to reach U.S. territory with SSBN strikes, there was also a corresponding increase in the range of defensive measures.<sup>44</sup> Pointing out this trend, Gorshkov writes:

The expansion of the potential of a fleet in solving the tasks of destroying ground objectives results in an *extension of the front* [emphasis added] and an increase in the depth of influence exercised by naval strategic weapon systems.<sup>45</sup>

Though this comment was made in the context of a discussion on how the scope of naval warfare had assumed "global proportions" which is, of course, very different from the

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<sup>44</sup>This process, incidentally, can be explained by the *Law of the Unity and Struggle of Opposites*, Chapter One, page 4.

<sup>45</sup>Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 223.

current limitations placed on the Soviet Navy, it is relevant to this comparison because the same reasoning is used by Chernavin to justify an extended defense perimeter. Gorshkov took the fleet to greater ranges based partly on the need to counter U.S. aircraft carriers and SSBNs and now Chernavin is trying to keep it there based on the same threat with one important addition, the sea-launched cruise missile.

Commenting on the presence of U.S. aircraft carriers and cruise missile platforms in the Pacific region, Admiral Chernavin states that the operations of the Soviet Navy "cannot be limited to coastal regions" as long as such deployments continue.<sup>46</sup> Along the same lines, he notes that Soviet borders and "the frontier of the state's security have not coincided for a long time, and they still don't."<sup>47</sup> The fact that the time factor and the element of surprise figure heavily into Chernavin's analysis of modern warfare suggests that he sees it necessary to continue efforts to engage enemy strike platforms before they can launch their weapons at an extended defense perimeter.

It is normally good practice to base analysis of Soviet naval strategy on exercise data, in addition to hardware and evidence from the literature. However, in the case of an extended defense perimeter the need to cut operational costs

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<sup>46</sup>"Chernavin Responds," 75.

<sup>47</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Flot-rodom iz Oktabriia," *Voennyi vestnik* No. 2 (1988): 19, in *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*, ed. David R. Jones (Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, 1990) 191.



has masked any definite plans to deploy the fleet far from home waters. There is simply not enough data to draw definite conclusions. Exercises involving an extended defense perimeter will probably be conducted as economic conditions allow.<sup>48</sup> In any case, Chernavin is likely to find support for his view that the Navy should be given greater responsibility as part of an enhanced perimeter defense mission because it is compatible with new doctrinal requirements.

Except for two significant differences, Admiral Chernavin's strategic vision encompasses the major themes of the Gorshkov era. In reality, it is not as simple as the new Chernavin relieving the old Gorshkov with only minor course changes. Admiral Chernavin's strategic vision is more correctly a synthesis of Gorshkov's views and his own, a process that is conditioned by today's requirements. After all, Gorshkov did the same combining the best ideas from old and new schools of Soviet naval thought.<sup>49</sup> The deciding factor in terms of Chernavin's strategic vision and whether it will be fulfilled is the political and economic environment in which the Navy must operate.

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<sup>48</sup>In the past, Chernavin has shown a definite preference for worldwide deployments, a policy first started under Gorshkov. See A.C.G. Wolstenholme, "Whither the Soviet Navy Under Chernavin," *Naval Review* (UK) 74.4 (1986): 287.

<sup>49</sup>See Robert W. Herrick, *Soviet Naval Theory and Policy: Gorshkov's Inheritance* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1989) 255-277.

## SAILING CONDITIONS

Admiral Chernavin's appointment coincides with the beginning of *perestroika* and dramatic changes in the sailing conditions facing the Soviet fleet. Gorshkov had fair winds and following seas while Chernavin must sail against an unpredictable storm hard on the Navy's bow. While Gorshkov rode the tide of Brezhnev's global ambitions to build an empire based on the spread of world communism, Chernavin is at the helm at a time when the Soviet empire is disintegrating and the only thing left to defend may very well be a few remaining Russian republics. The Navy's mission of furthering the cause of socialism abroad becomes obsolete when it is foundering at home, caused in part by the Gorshkov-inspired naval build-up. Under New Political Thinking, the Navy's role in peacetime foreign policy is to stay in port. This is important not because it is essential to Chernavin's vision, but in that it is one less reason that he can use to justify a large and powerful fleet.

Perhaps the most significant change in the sailing conditions is in the amount of resources available to the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy. Gorshkov operated with apparently unlimited resources under Brezhnev. Overcoming inertia within the military, he appealed to level one decision makers and was able to build just about anything that he

wanted.<sup>50</sup> Such is not the case with Admiral Chernavin. Reasonable sufficiency doctrine and the troubled waters of the Soviet economy vastly complicate his task of balancing the fleet. Public charges from members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences that the fleet is an expensive luxury is not something that Gorshkov had to steer against. On a positive note, Chernavin's views are attractive to President Gorbachev's reformers who are looking to economize on defense. His emphasis on combined arms and combat readiness is seen as the most efficient management of effort and resources.

In summary, Chernavin is both politically and strategically orthodox, affirming the guiding role of the Party and a unified approach to the Navy's missions. He will take what is relevant from Gorshkov's views and apply it to current conditions. Soviet naval missions, as they change, will reflect the dominant aspects of Chernavin's strategic vision. These are the closer integration of the Navy's missions with the actions of other services, improved combat readiness of fleet units, and a balanced fleet that will remain capable of distant, however unpracticed, operations at an extended defensive perimeter from the homeland.

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<sup>50</sup>The only major exception was the large-deck carrier of the *Kuznetsov* class which arrived at the end of Gorshkov's tenure for reasons of cost and technical deficiencies.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## Soviet Perceptions of the U.S. Naval Threat

New doctrinal requirements have not changed Soviet perceptions of the U.S. naval threat. If anything, their sense of insecurity has intensified in light of force reductions elsewhere. Despite historic improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations, a fog of mistrust continues to surround the two nations at sea. This contrast was evident in the aftermath of the visit of Soviet warships to Norfolk in July 1989, part of a productive program which the Soviets termed "ship visits for mutual understanding." After their stay in Norfolk, two of the ships, a *Slava* class cruiser and a *Sovremennyy* class destroyer, proceeded immediately to the Mediterranean Sea where they shadowed a U.S. task force operating in the area. The fact that the Soviets still consider the U.S. Navy a threat is no revelation. The relevant question is what threatens the Soviets the most as the 1990s begin and what impact this might have for future naval strategy. Gorbachev and the General Staff are so clearly preoccupied with forward deployed strike platforms capable of reaching deep into Soviet territory that large unilateral naval force reductions are no longer a consideration. This has implications for the Navy in that it will probably be given primary responsibility for defending

against U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups and land attack cruise missile carriers. However, this is a very ambitious and expensive undertaking that the Soviets would like to avoid if possible. The preferred approach is to negotiate a reduction in the U.S. threat via naval arms control. Perceptions of the threat and diplomatic efforts to reduce it are central to the redefinition of Soviet naval missions.

#### REACTIONS TO THE U.S. MARITIME STRATEGY

Soviet perceptions of the U.S. naval threat are drawn from the U.S. Maritime Strategy. As Soviet strategy evolves in the early 1990s and is debated among members of the General Staff, reactions to the Maritime Strategy will characterize many of the decisions that are made.

The Maritime Strategy has been modified slightly since its inception in the early to mid 1980s and remains dependent on the course of U.S.-Soviet relations as well as shifting fiscal priorities. The latest version is expected to reflect changes that swept through Eastern Europe in the revolution of 1989 and projected levels of U.S. defense spending. However, there is one element that will remain constant: the forward deployment of U.S. naval forces with superior strike potential in areas that the Soviets consider their oceanic theaters. In essence, the Maritime Strategy is a forward strategy, an orientation that is not dependent on developments in the Soviet Navy even if it does succeed in becoming a defensive

force. The forward deployment of U.S. naval forces is needed to react to a variety of circumstances apart from the Soviet threat, instability in the Middle East being the most prominent example. A forward deployed U.S. carrier battle group was in the area within days of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Incidentally, the Persian Gulf War has no doubt intensified Soviet perceptions of the U.S. naval threat given the widespread success of sea-launched cruise missiles and the fact that six aircraft carriers operated simultaneously in the region. Many of the Iraqi defenses, though not top quality, were provided by the Soviets.

For now, the Maritime Strategy is directed primarily at the Soviets and will continue to figure into their military planning for the foreseeable future. Released in a January 1986 special issue of *Proceedings*, the Maritime Strategy sets forth general guidelines for naval operations in a worldwide confrontation with the Soviet Union. The Soviet strategist was faced with an explicit three phase approach: deterrence and transition to war; seizing the initiative; and carrying the fight to the enemy. An analysis of the Maritime Strategy according to this framework was featured in the January 1990 edition of *Military Thought*, the prestigious journal of the Soviet General Staff, and is a good indication that the Soviets still see the Maritime Strategy as a relevant factor in strategic planning even though it may seem irrelevant in

political terms.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Maritime Strategy contains three major innovations that challenge the Soviet Navy as it enters the 1990s. First, the Soviets surmise that, in the initial period of war, the U.S. will attempt to blockade Soviet naval bases and destroy their surface fleet in port and in home waters. The objective would be to prevent them from breaking out and attacking NATO sea lines of communication. Secondly, the Maritime Strategy is clear in its purpose to involve Soviet territory through deep strikes from aircraft carriers and, increasingly, long-range cruise missiles. Lastly, as part of an effort to limit the Soviet nuclear strike capability, the plan calls for an aggressive campaign to destroy Soviet SSBNs. Of these three challenges, the threat from surface, air, and submarine-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles and carrier battle groups receive the most attention from military planners.

The presence of U.S. naval forces in waters near the Soviet Union is a source of constant concern for military leaders. When Marshal Akhromeyev was Chief of the General Staff the first thing on his agenda every morning was a brief on the locations of U.S. naval forces.<sup>2</sup> General Moiseyev seems no less concerned about the situation at sea:

Hundreds of American military bases situated around the Soviet Union, carrier striking forces, deck-based

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<sup>1</sup>"U.S. Naval Strategy," *Voyennaya Mysl* No. 1 (1990):59-65; trans. JPRS-UMT-90-001-L, 22 February 1990, 34-39.

<sup>2</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 23 February 1989.

aviation, and U.S. naval forces, which have a substantial superiority over the Soviet Navy, give rise to our constant concern. Sea-launched cruise missiles which the United States refuses to limit are acquiring ever greater danger.<sup>3</sup>

Moiseyev indicates what threatens the Soviets the most: carriers and cruise missiles. Admiral Chernavin does the same when asked for his thoughts on the Maritime Strategy:

Unlike the Soviet Navy's, the U.S. naval strategy has the pure appearance of an active offensive - I will allow myself to say it more harshly - an aggressive bent...the introduction of such concepts as "forward maritime deployment," "deterrence strategy," "regions of vital importance to the United States," and others - meaning in essence the delivery of nuclear missile strikes deep inside the territory of the Soviet Union and the blockade of its coast - anticipates for the realization of this conception powerful strike forces. Priority in this case is given to sea strike forces: above all, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and large surface vessels with Tomahawk cruise missiles.<sup>4</sup>

The General Staff envisions three to four carrier battle groups closing within range of the homeland along the Norther Flank and in the Pacific region. While the Soviet inferiority in aircraft carriers has long been the case, the focus on cruise missiles is a relatively new development that will have a large impact on the Navy's role under a defensive doctrine. A brief discussion on the nature of sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) is in order.

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<sup>3</sup>M.A. Moiseyev, *Pravda* 13 March 1989, in Captain 2nd Rank V. Dotsenko, "Soviet Art of Naval Warfare in the Postwar Period," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 7 (1989): 28, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>4</sup>"Chernavin Responds," *Proceedings* February 1989: 76. Admiral Chernavin reportedly keeps a copy of the Maritime Strategy on his desk for easy reference.



The Soviets are themselves experienced users of SLCMs having deployed them on surface ships at about the same time as the U.S. in the early 1960s. The first true cruise missile to be developed by the Soviets was the SS-N-3 *Shaddock* which was deployed on *Kynda* class cruisers in 1962 in the anti-ship role. The Soviets used captured German technology to develop the capability to launch the *Shaddock* from *Whiskey*, *Juliett*, and *Echo* class submarines in the strategic land-attack role. Their most advanced land-attack cruise missile is the SS-N-21 which has been termed the "Tomahawski" by Western intelligence because of its striking similarity to the U.S. Tomahawk.

The deployment in large numbers of long-range SLCMs stands out as a revolutionary trend in modern sea warfare that has changed the equation of offense and defense and presented Soviet strategists with a range of complications across the entire threat axis. The U.S. started deployment in 1984 of nearly 4000 Tomahawks on attack submarines and surface ships.<sup>5</sup> This was done mainly to draw Soviet sights away from the carrier and disperse the strike capability throughout the battle group. Within a matter of years, the threat increased from 15 aircraft carriers to hundreds of mobile SLCM carriers. The capabilities of the Tomahawk are worthy of Soviet threat perceptions. The land attack version can travel upwards of

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<sup>5</sup>For an explanation of the *Tomahawk's* capabilities and employment see S.J. Froggett, "The Maritime Strategy: Tomahawk's Role," *Proceedings*, February 1987: 51-54.

1200 nautical miles on its own inertial guidance with a nuclear or conventional warhead and is accurate to within just a few meters. The Soviets are greatly concerned about the prospect of Tomahawks striking deep into the homeland, particularly from submarines which can penetrate air defenses and achieve a greater range over land. (See Figures 3,4 pages 108,109) The authors of *The Navy* address the cruise missile threat as one the principal trends in modern naval warfare that will determine the fleet's missions:

The intent is to use these missiles to turn the entire ocean including the seas washing our country's shores into launch position areas. Sea-launched cruise missiles...[are] also a threat to troop groupings and installations thousands of kilometers from shore. A situation is created in which light, short-range naval forces have become capable of accomplishing strategic missions.<sup>6</sup>

From the U.S. perspective, SLCMs will ensure that the Soviets move towards a defensive orientation, but from the Soviet perspective they are a serious complication. There are several implications of the SLCM threat for Soviet strategy and these will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6 under the perimeter defense mission. It should be noted here that the bottom line is that the Soviet Navy will be given increased responsibility under a defensive doctrine for countering the U.S. Navy strike potential.

Related to the Maritime Strategy are Soviet concerns about the active cooperation of U.S. allies. The Soviets have

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<sup>6</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 25-26.

noted that the Maritime Strategy hinges on the active cooperation of U.S. allies, mainly Norway and Japan because they occupy pivotal positions in the Atlantic and Pacific oceanic theaters. While Norway has warmed to Soviet naval arms control proposals and maintains only a small navy, the Japanese are viewed by the Soviets as a growing menace based on increased security cooperation with the U.S. and an impressive naval build-up that includes diesel submarines and aircraft carriers. Japan's role in the Maritime Strategy would be to assist the United States in gaining sea control in the Northern Pacific and the Sea of Japan. This has been practiced in joint exercises with the U.S. that included mock strikes on Soviet territory. The Soviets view the Japanese naval build-up as a direct challenge to the operations of their Pacific Fleet which is homeported on the Sea of Japan at Vladivostok.

The literature indicates that Japanese naval developments are a consideration in Soviet strategic planning. General Moiseyev states that there is an "enormous" potential for Japan's militarization.<sup>7</sup> Admiral Chernavin focuses on the potential for Japanese power projection:

We cannot fail to take into consideration the program for the build-up of Japan's naval power because of the construction and the inclusion of aircraft carriers in

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<sup>7</sup>M.A. Moiseyev, "Istoki napryazhennosti," [The Sources of Tension] *Pravda* 4 May 1989: 4, in Norman Cigar, "The Navy's Battle of the Budget: Soviet Style," 16.



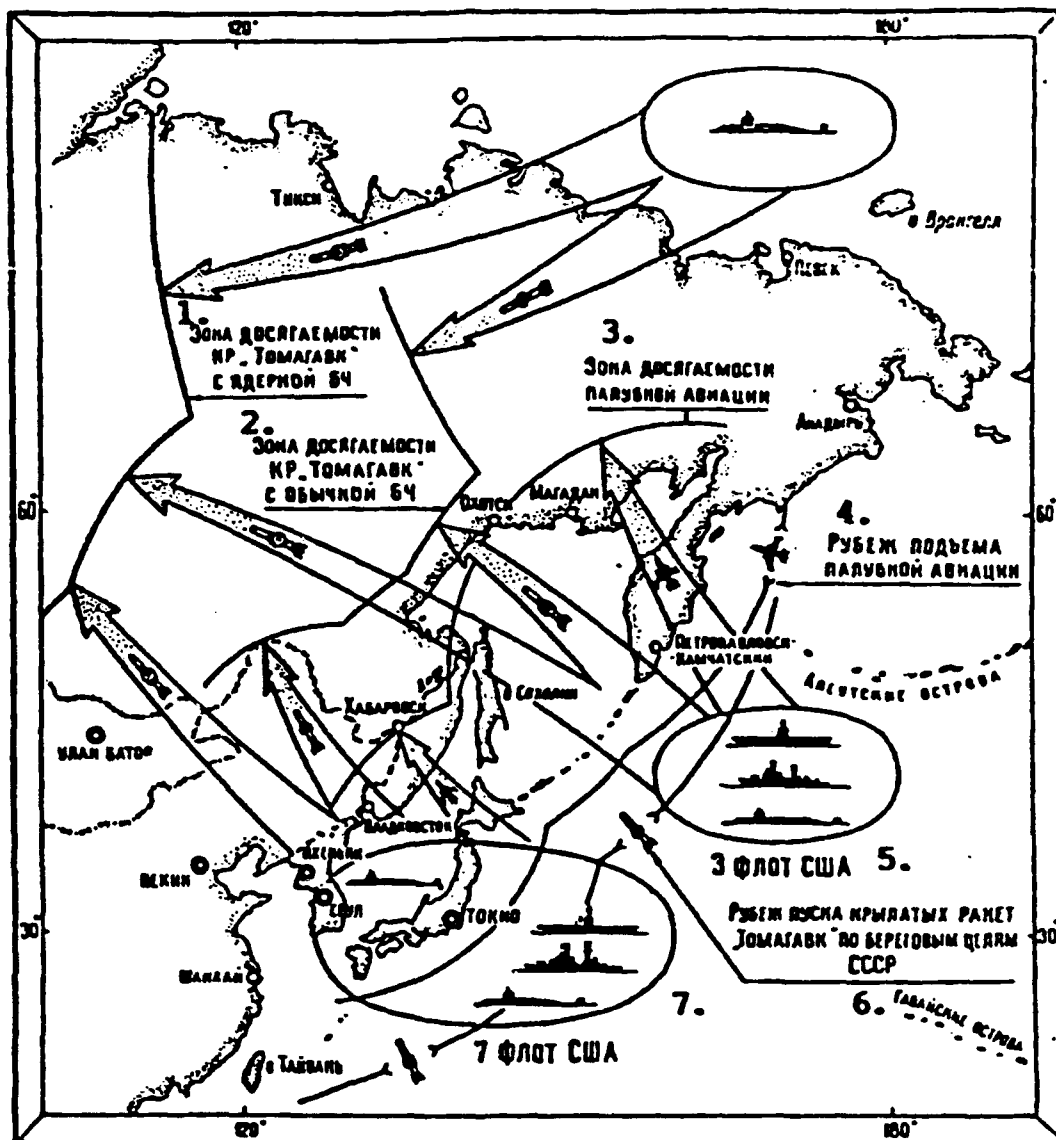


Figure 4: Soviet Assessment of the U.S. Threat in the Pacific Region

**LEGEND:**

1. Tomahawk cruise missiles with nuclear warheads
2. Tomahawk cruise missiles with conventional warheads
3. Carrier-based aircraft strike zone
4. Boundary for take-off of carrier-based aircraft
5. U.S. Third Fleet
6. Boundary for launch of Tomahawk cruise missiles against land targets
7. U.S. Seventh Fleet

Source: *Morskoi Sbornik*, No. 2, 1989.

its naval order of battle.<sup>8</sup>

In one of his last articles in *Morskoi Sbornik*, Gorshkov listed the growing militarization of Japan as a threat that the Soviet Navy must address.<sup>9</sup> How the Navy might address this perceived threat is a very important consideration for the development of a defensive doctrine.

It is reasonable to assume that Soviet concerns over the active cooperation of U.S. allies in the Maritime Strategy have led them to develop some type of counterstrategy. The objective would be to neutralize Norway and Japan and seize military bases before the U.S. could enlist their support. There is reason to believe that these plans are realistically kept an option in current Soviet strategy since assessments of the Maritime Strategy have gone unchanged. Such a counterstrategy has the potential of contravening the defensive doctrine if it would involve preemptive strikes on foreign bases, ports, or airfields or the seizing of territory.

Despite attempts at reorienting military planning in the Soviet Union from superiority to sufficiency, the level of the perceived threat remains as the dominant factor in developing

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<sup>8</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Protivostoyaniye," [Confrontation], *Agitator armii i flota* No. 9 (1988): 7, in Norman Cigar 16. See also V. Vinogradov, "Im tesno?," [Do they find it crowded], *Krasnaya zvezda* 28 April 1989: 3.

<sup>9</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, "The Experience of the Great Patriotic War and the Present Stage in the Development of the Naval Art," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 4 (1985): 19, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

strategy. Planning the Navy's future role is contingent upon developments in the U.S. Maritime Strategy, modifications of which are awaiting concrete indications of the Soviet shift to a defensive doctrine. The Soviets perceive an offensive bent in the Maritime Strategy in the forward deployment of U.S. naval forces with superior strike capabilities, but this presence is not likely to change by the year 2000. This raises the important question of whether the Soviets might be compelled to retain significant offensive capabilities in order to match the perceived threat. Such a response was certainly advocated by Gorshkov:

...the only correct solution to the problem of the security of the country could be the creation of a situation capable of confronting the militarist circles of the West with the same problems which they had tried to thrust on us.<sup>10</sup>

While this has the appearance of 'old' thinking, military leaders might view a strong counter to the Maritime Strategy as a strategic necessity and choose not to follow New Thinking's requirement for building mutual security. In either case, the General Staff is not about to dismiss the potential for strikes on Soviet territory in the early 1990s out of economic expediency or improved relations. For now, until perceptions of the U.S. naval threat change, the broad outlines of future Soviet naval missions will be determined in reaction to the original version of the Maritime Strategy.

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<sup>10</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 178.

## REDUCING THE THREAT VIA NAVAL ARMS CONTROL

Potential naval arms control agreements are a pivotal element in Soviet strategic planning for the 1990s. Efforts at reducing the U.S. threat via naval arms control are an integral part of Gorbachev's perestroika program.<sup>11</sup> If the capabilities of the U.S. Navy can be circumscribed in a treaty, then the General Staff can, with peace of mind, lend their support to naval reductions and a further shift in resources to the civilian sector. After a brief look at what has been proposed, the question of why the Soviets are pursuing naval arms control with such fervor will be highlighted. Then, most importantly, the implications of naval arms control, or the lack thereof, for the Soviet Navy will be addressed.

Reflecting the new emphasis on political means, the Soviets have sought to bring the United States to the negotiating table on the issue of naval arms control with a comprehensive diplomatic offensive. Efforts are directed not just at Washington, but also at a number of allied capitals and interested parties with the intent of exerting pressure from all quarters. Since 1986, the Soviets have surfaced the idea of naval arms control in one form or another on no less than forty-five occasions. Gorbachev himself has pressed the issue in major speeches at Vladivostok in July 1986, Murmansk

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<sup>11</sup>See Captain William H.J. Manthorpe, Jr., USN (Ret.), "Why Is Gorbachev Pushing Naval Arms Control," *Proceedings* January 1989: 73-77.



in October 1987, Krasnoyarsk in September 1988, and in his meeting with President Bush aboard a U.S. warship off of Malta in December 1989. At Malta, Gorbachev stated that "the time has come to begin talking about naval forces."<sup>12</sup> A logical place to begin this discussion of naval arms control would be to look at just what the Soviets are proposing.

Soviet proposals fall into one of three general categories: confidence and security building measures (CSBMs); geographical restrictions; and limitations on nuclear SLCMs.

CSBMs involves applying procedures that already exist on land in Europe to naval forces at sea. The most common CSBMs are for notification of major exercises, limits on the number of ships and aircraft that can participate, and stationing of observers aboard each other's vessels. The scope of CSBM proposals is usually regional; however, some Soviet officials have indicated that they would ultimately like to see naval forces contained within a global CSBM regime.<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement and the 1989 Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities Agreement already exist as effective bilateral confidence building mechanisms.

The second category, geographical constraints,

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<sup>12</sup>Quoted in V. Starodubov, "On the Need for Talks on Naval Forces," *Izvestiya*, 8 January 1990: 5, trans. *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* Vol. XLII No. 2 (1990): 18.

<sup>13</sup>This proposal was made by the Soviet delegation to the United Nations Seminar on Confidence-Building Measures in the Maritime Environment (Varna, Bulgaria, 4-6 September 1990). Memorandum for the Record, SAIC Corporation, 18 September 1990.

encompasses a variety of Soviet proposals aimed at keeping U.S. naval forces at an arms distance. These include ASW-free zones where Soviet and U.S. SSBNs would be able to patrol without fear of attack. However, the stealth of modern submarines make any sort of ASW-free zone unverifiable. The other major subcategory is for the establishment of nuclear-free zones where all naval nuclear weapons would be banned, an idea that has been particularly well-received by third party nations eager to reduce the risk of nuclear confrontation in their backyard.<sup>14</sup> Again, the real issue in this regard is not what weapons exist inside the zone, but what weapons can be brought to bear within the zone from outside the zone (ballistic or cruise missiles, aircraft, etc.) The last type of geographical constraint is for "zones of peace" in certain areas that would limit or prohibit the presence of U.S. and Soviet warships. The idea of creating different "zones" at sea is an example of the traditional Soviet military mindset under the guise of New Political Thinking. Such zones are simply an extension of the traditional Russian/Soviet continental ambition to build a buffer zone between the homeland and potential enemies.

Of all Soviet naval arms control proposals, the ones

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<sup>14</sup>See Richard Fieldhouse, ed., *Security at Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Ronald O'Rourke, *Naval Arms Control*, A Congressional Research Service Issue Brief, 28 November 1989; Chandra Kumar, "The Indian Ocean: Arc of Crisis or Zone of Peace," *International Affairs* 60.1 (1984): 231-246; Falk Bomsdorf, "The Soviet Union's Nordic Initiative," *Aussenpolitik* 40.1 (1989): 55-65.

involving SLCMs are the most sought after. Viewed as the most threatening aspect of U.S. naval power, conventional and nuclear SLCMs are the only major weapon capable of affecting the land battle yet to have been addressed by formal missile negotiations such as SALT I/II and the prospective START Treaty that is to affect only SSBNs. The Soviets originally wanted to include SLCMs as part of a prospective START Treaty. A compromise was made for a provision outside START in which each side will declare annually the maximum number of deployed nuclear SLCMs with a limit of 880 and, in principle, explore possible methods of verifying an agreement on nuclear SLCMs.<sup>15</sup> The most frequent proposals are for limitations on the number of SLCMs aboard submarines and for a total ban on their deployment aboard surface ships. The Soviets are also redoubling their efforts to secure an agreement that would limit the number of forward deployed SLCM-equipped ships and keep them from operating within range of their territory. Table 2 on the next page summarizes specific Soviet proposals in each of the three categories.

The Soviet leadership has placed particular emphasis on naval arms control out of fear that the correlation of forces

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<sup>15</sup>U.S. Department of State, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, "Nuclear and Space Talks: U.S. and Soviet Proposals," *Issues Brief* 3 July 1990. The Soviets claim that effective means of verification already exist citing a July 1989 experiment that was sponsored jointly by the Natural Resources Defense Council, a private U.S. organization, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences in which the presence of a nuclear SLCM on a Slava cruiser was purportedly detected from a helicopter flying close aboard.

at sea will not be addressed by forthcoming agreements. Naval forces have yet to be covered in formal negotiations and the outlook for the future is expected to be more of the same given a unified U.S. government stance against even entertaining such an idea. The Soviets worry

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Table 2: Summary of Soviet Naval  
Arms Control Proposals

Category One:

- \* Advance notification of major exercises in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and in the Mediterranean Sea
- \* Limitations on the scale and number of naval exercises in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans
- \* Limits (approx. 15 warships) on U.S. and Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea
- \* Regional or global CSBM regimes

Category Two:

- \* ASW-free zones for SSBNs in the Baltic, North, Norwegian, and Greenland Seas and in parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans
- \* Establishment of nuclear-free zones in Southeast Asia, the Southern Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and in the Nordic region
- \* Establishment of an Indian Ocean "zone of peace" with naval forces of non-littoral states excluded
- \* Establishment of an Arctic "zone of peace"
- \* Withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet naval forces from the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas
- \* Ban on naval activity in selected international straits

Category Three:

- \* Limit of 400 SLCMs on selected classes of submarines
- \* Ban on SLCMs for surface ships
- \* Agreements not to deploy ships carrying SLCMs within range of Soviet territory

Miscellaneous:

- \* Decommissioning 100 Soviet submarines in exchange for the removal from service of 5 to 7 U.S. aircraft carriers
  - \* Withdrawal from Cam Ranh Bay naval base in Vietnam in exchange for the U.S. withdrawal from facilities at Subic Bay in the Philippines
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that in the rush to conclude a Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement and a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) as part of building a new security framework on the European continent Western maritime superiority will be left unscathed.

Equating sea power with land power, the Soviets have characterized naval arms control as the logical and fair response to large reductions in ground forces and combat aviation. From their perspective, U.S. intransigence on the issue has confirmed charges of aggressive intent. This has brought about a shift in the Soviet strategic focus from the center to the flanks where the threat is said to have increased. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the pending CFE agreement has occasioned a relative increase in concern over the correlation of naval forces. Explained from the Soviet perspective:

...the process of arms control and disarmament is proceeding in such a way that, today, the naval forces represent a component which is being weakly controlled within the framework of international agreements. As ground forces and combat aviation are being reduced, there is a corresponding increase in the contribution of naval forces to the balance of forces...it becomes absolutely obvious that U.S. naval forces are beginning to represent a real and direct threat to the territory of the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

Under these circumstances, securing an agreement that would limit forward deployed U.S. naval forces has become a task of critical importance. From the perspective of the General

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<sup>16</sup>Captain First Rank I.F. Bocharov, "Soviet-U.S. Naval Balance Viewed," *SSha Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya* No. 9 (1990): 68-74, trans. JPRS-USA-91-001, 14 January 1991, 13, 15.

Staff, reducing Soviet naval capabilities would be an acceptable trade-off in order to place limitations on the forward deployed strike potential of the U.S. Navy. The Navy is apparently viewed by some in the military and the government as a bargaining chip in the effort to reduce the Western threat and defense expenditures. For example, when asked about the prospect of a mutual U.S.-Soviet elimination of SSBNs, General-Colonel Nikolai Chervov, Director of the General Staff's Treaties and Arms Control Directorate, did not dismiss it outright, but instead responded coolly, "The Americans haven't made such a proposal yet. If they do, we'll study it."<sup>17</sup> While it is likely that the naval arms control offensive will lessen as the Soviet leadership's attention is drawn increasingly inward to quell domestic unrest, such efforts are expected to endure as an important consideration in strategic planning.<sup>18</sup>

As for the implications of potential naval arms control for future Soviet strategy, developments could steer the Navy in one of two directions depending upon whether or not formal agreements are reached. In the unlikely event that accords on naval forces limiting SLCMs and/or imposing geographical

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<sup>17</sup>Interview, "*I nodi militari da sciogliere*," [The military Knots that Have to be United] *La Stampa* (Italian) 29 May 1988: 5, in Cigar 20.

<sup>18</sup>See Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, Director of Naval Intelligence, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on intelligence issues, 7 March 1991: 15.

restrictions are signed, the Soviet Navy is expected to decline in strategic importance and head more towards coastal waters. But if naval arms control remains the nonstarter that it is today and Soviet proposals continue to fall upon deaf ears in Washington, the Navy can be expected to rise in strategic importance as part of the shift from the center to the flanks. The fleet would receive the same amount of resources in order to deploy as the first line of defense against land-attack SLCMs.

Ironically, U.S. reluctance to get involved in restrictive naval arms control may be helping to preserve Soviet naval power. There is reliable evidence that Soviet Navy leadership, as opposed to the General Staff and political leadership, does not support naval arms control because it would lessen the role of the fleet and serve as reason for a further reduction in its size.<sup>19</sup> Skillfully employing the U.S. refusal to enter into formal naval force negotiations, Admiral Chernavin appeals to Soviet patriotism in making the case for a strong Navy:

Both NATO and the United States preach the "forward sea basing" doctrine as before. They are unrelentingly building up their naval forces and do not agree to talks on their reduction...In this situation, should we scrap naval vessels? I trust that every patriot, every Soviet person will give this unequivocal answer: if we don't want to become hostages in the hands of aggressive

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<sup>19</sup>*The Soviet Navy in the Era of Perestroika*, "Rapporteur's report of a Joint Office of Naval Intelligence and Center For Naval Analyses Symposium (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, December 1990) 26.

forces, we should not.<sup>20</sup>

Stated this way, the need for continued naval development expressed in a reinforced naval strategy is bound to be viewed by the political leadership as the safest course to follow. Relative to other services, the Navy may very well prosper in the absence of naval arms control.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the preponderance of Western naval forces outside of naval arms control agreements may be a factor that, to the Soviets, would make the move to a defensive doctrine a dangerous one. This possibility was pointed out in no uncertain terms by Marshal Akhromeyev:

...if we actually reduce [strategic and conventional] forces on a reciprocal basis, while the U.S. naval forces and U.S. naval bases surrounding the USSR remain intact, the military threat for the USSR will increase and the position of the Soviet Union in the world will deteriorate.<sup>22</sup>

Akhromeyev went on to cite President Gorbachev's October 1989 address to the Helsinki CSCE conference where Gorbachev stated

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<sup>20</sup>V.N. Chernavin, interview, *Tass* 28 July 1989, in Pay and Till 182; See also V.N. Chernavin, "Prepare Yourself For Modern Warfare," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1989): 3.

<sup>21</sup>The Army has already absorbed major reductions with the fall of the Warsaw Pact, unilateral reductions, and in preparation for a CFE agreement. The Strategic Rocket Forces stand to be reduced in the event that the START Treaty is signed. Also, the Navy is receiving weapons and personnel from the Army and Air Forces as these two services attempt to minimize the destructive effects of a CFE agreement.

<sup>22</sup>S. Akhromeyev, "The USSR Favors Dialogue and Cooperation. But What About the United States?" *Pravda* 30 October 1989: 7, trans. FBIS-SOV-89-209, 31 October 1989, 1-3; See also M.S. Gorbachev, *Speech to the CPSU Central Committee Plenum* 9 December 1989, *Pravda* 10 December 1989, trans. Leon Goure, "The Soviet Strategic View," *Strategic Review* Winter (1990): 79.



in reference to U.S. naval superiority that the "transition to nonoffensive defense will simply not take place unless this problem is solved." Judging from the comments of Gorbachev and Akhromeyev, it is clear that the Gorbachev leadership will not undertake large unilateral naval force reductions without an agreement limiting the strike potential and presence of the U.S. Navy. In the absence of such an agreement on the horizon, future Soviet naval strategy will be based in large degree on the forward course of the U.S. Navy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## The New Soviet Aircraft Carrier in Uncharted Waters

The new Soviet aircraft carriers of the *Kuznetsov* class are making their first deployments in the largely uncharted waters of defense restructuring where the costs and benefits of such ships are the subject of an intense debate between civilian and military officials. The military insists that the *Kuznetsov* and follow-on units are an essential addition to the fleet needed to provide long-range air cover for ships and submarines operating outside the umbrella of shore-based fighters. This role, they say, is wholly consistent with new defensive requirements. The *institutchiki*, on the other hand, argue that Western style aircraft carriers are both strategically unnecessary and economically unwise given the new approach to ensuring national security and the desperate need to shift resources to the civilian sector. Now that one carrier has been completed with another ready to leave the shipyards within a year and construction of a third unit is proceeding with no signs of a slowdown, the question is not so much does the Soviet Union need large-deck carriers, but what should their roles and missions be in the context of a defensive doctrine. The answer to this question, still mired in the fog of debate in the early 1990s, is perhaps the most important indicator of true Soviet intentions at sea and the

course of future naval strategy. For this reason, the new Soviet aircraft carrier merits special analysis prior to discussion of the fleet's strategic missions.

The carrier question will be addressed from first a historical standpoint with an eye towards determining the traditional view of such ships. Next, the capabilities and prospective missions of the *Kuznetsov* class and follow-on units will be evaluated. Lastly, the dynamics of the civil-military debate will be examined based on one of the more heated and comprehensive exchanges between new thinkers and the Navy.

#### THE FULFILLMENT OF LONG HELD AMBITIONS

The *Kuznetsov* class should not be viewed as an anomaly in Soviet naval development, but rather the fulfillment of long held ambitions to have the same capability as the British and American navies. According to one source, the idea of an aircraft-carrying ship originated with the Imperial Russian Navy when, in 1909, the renowned pilot and ship engineer Captain L. Matsiyevich suggested to the Main Naval Staff the idea of building an *avianosets* or aircraft carrier.<sup>1</sup> However, the idea to construct carriers did not surface again in substantive form until the late 1930s when Stalin included "small" and "big" carriers in shipbuilding plans only too

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<sup>1</sup>A. Popov, "Heavy-Aircraft-Carrying Cruiser," *Voyennyye Znaniya* No. 4 (1990): 16, trans. JPRS-UMA-90-012, 17 May 1990, 97.

cancel them some two or three years later.<sup>2</sup> This initial attempt by the Navy to build carriers was met with stiff resistance by Army and Communist Party officials who classified them as inherently "aggressive." The start of World War II cancelled, but did not kill, the Soviet Navy's interest in aircraft carriers.

In the immediate postwar period, Soviet ambitions to build an aircraft carrier were revived when Stalin embarked on a program of naval expansion that emphasized capital ships. At the time, the goal was not to be able to conduct large-scale distant operations like the U.S. had decisively done against Japan, but to gain command of the seas along the Soviet periphery. By 1946, proponents of carrier development had staged a comeback. The following assertion was made in *Military Thought*, the respected journal of the General Staff:

The conditions of modern war at sea demand the mandatory participation in the combat operations of navies of powerful carrier forces, using them for striking devastating blows against the naval forces of the enemy as well as the contest with his aviation both at sea and near one's bases. These tasks can only be carried out by carrier aviation.<sup>3</sup>

Again, the Navy included carriers in shipbuilding plans and began to work on their design. Though the predominant opinion

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<sup>2</sup>Robert W. Herrick, *Soviet Naval Theory and Policy: Gorshkov's Inheritance* 91. Herrick bases this assertion on information from Admiral Kuznetsov's postwar memoirs.

<sup>3</sup>I. Schnez, "Avianostsi i ikh rol'v operatsiakh flota," [Aircraft carriers and their role in the operations of a navy], *Voyennyye Mysl'* No. 6 (1946): 82, in *Soviet Naval Strategy*, by Herrick 58.

within the Navy was that carriers would be necessary for the future defense of the homeland, these hopes were soon dashed along with plans for a large surface fleet as part of Khrushchev's cuts. It should be noted that Khrushchev did actually want to construct a set of carriers, but decided that the need for post-Stalinist economic reform should take precedence and that the submarine was a more effective and less expensive weapon. Writing in exile, Khrushchev recalls this decision:

Aircraft carriers, of course, are the second most effective weapon in a modern navy. The Americans had a mighty carrier fleet - no one could deny that. I'll admit that I felt a nagging desire to have some in our own navy but we couldn't afford to build them. They were simply beyond our means.<sup>4</sup>

Today, he is criticized for making an "arbitrary decision" based on "voluntaristic tendencies" in halting the design of carriers.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, Soviet interest in carriers continued, but always in theoretical terms in the realm of military science.<sup>6</sup> It wasn't until the mid 1960s and the Eighth Five-year plan that the decision was made to build the Soviet Navy's first aircraft carrier, the Kiev.

Construction on the Kiev class started in 1970 at the

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<sup>4</sup>Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little and Brown, 1974) 31.

<sup>5</sup>Popov 97.

<sup>6</sup>One of the most forward suggestions came in September 1955 in the Soviet Navy newspaper, *Soviet Fleet*, which carried the article, "British Carrier Aviation," that listed the carrier's principal missions as striking shore installations and destroying ships and submarines. Gillette and Frank, 181.

Nikolayev yards on the Black Sea. The fourth and last unit was completed in 1986. The Kiev was originally classified by the Soviet Navy as a heavy anti-submarine cruiser [*tyazholyi protivolodchyi kreyser*] and then, in the early 1980s, as a heavy aircraft-carrying cruiser [*takticheskoye avianosnyy kreyser*]. The Kiev's capabilities make it more of a semi-aircraft carrier with an angled flight deck, no arresting gear or catapults, and an air wing of around 14 Yak-38 *Forger* vertical and short take-off and landing aircraft (VSTOL) and 20 helicopters.

The Kiev class has some significant shortcomings that make it inadequate for the multi-mission roles that the Soviets currently attribute to large-deck carriers. It cannot carry simultaneously enough aircraft to support both ASW, its primary mission, and fleet air defense. Notably, it does carry formidable anti-surface capabilities in the 300 nautical mile range SS-N-12 *Sandbox* cruise missile. Its design places limitations on the amount of fuel and ordnance that can be stowed aboard making it incapable of sustained operations without frequent replenishment. Also, the Kiev class has no special purpose aircraft for airborne early warning (AEW), electronic warfare (EW), and reconnaissance. In comparison to U.S. carriers, the Kiev displaces half of an American carrier and the number of fixed-wing aircraft on all four units of the class do not equal the air wing of one U.S. CVN. Looking at these shortcomings, it is not hard to understand why the

Soviets felt compelled to build large-deck Western style carriers.

The Kiev class should be viewed as the first major step of a growing capability of the Navy to sustain air operations at sea. The net value of these ships is expected to increase as they begin to be used in conjunction with the more capable Kuznetsov class and follow-on units.

#### CAPABILITIES AND PROSPECTIVE MISSIONS

When assessing the capabilities and missions of the new Soviet aircraft carrier it is important to guard against mirror imaging, the universal anathema of intelligence analysis. Just because the Soviets have developed a class of ships that are similar in their capabilities to U.S. ships does not necessarily mean that they will use them to perform the same missions. U.S. carriers exist for the mission of forward deployed power projection, while the Soviet Navy plans to deploy its new carriers as an extension of the land-based air defense perimeter in the role of fleet air support. First, it is useful to assess the objective capabilities of the Kuznetsov in order to then evaluate prospective missions.

The Soviets state that the Kuznetsov is capable of supporting up to sixty aircraft, all intended for the role of fleet air defense. However, because of limited hangar space her air wing should number between twenty and twenty-four

fighter-interceptors and four or more helicopters.<sup>7</sup> Flight operations commenced on the *Kuznetsov* in November 1989, well ahead of Western estimates.<sup>8</sup> The military was apparently trying to convince decision makers of the new carrier's capabilities at a crucial point in the defense budget debates. The *Kuznetsov* is far superior to the *Kiev* in its CTOL capabilities. Instead of steam catapults, which the Soviet Navy is furiously working to develop, the *Kuznetsov* class has a sloped bow or "ski jump." The Soviets are currently testing three main fixed wing aircraft aboard the new carrier: the Su-27 *Flanker*, Mig-29 *Fulcrum*, and the Su-25UT *Frogfoot*. The *Flanker* is an all-weather long-range interceptor similar to the U.S. Air Force F-15 *Eagle*. While the Su-27 is patrolling the outer air perimeter, the Mig-29 will be operating at medium ranges. The Mig-29 is also capable of shifting to the ground attack role with the capacity to carry over 8000 pounds of ordnance. Along with the *Fulcrum*, the *Frogfoot* is cause for concern that the Soviet carriers, though weighted towards the defensive, are being equipped for offensive operations. The Su-25UT is a two-seat trainer version of a light ground attack aircraft transferred to the Navy from the Soviet Air Forces and was used extensively in Afghanistan. The worry is that the Soviets will use the *Frogfoot* to project power past

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<sup>7</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 7 March 1991, 23.

<sup>8</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990,



the shore from the maritime axes. Additional aircraft that are expected to be deployed aboard the *Kuznetsov* in small numbers are the Yak-38 *Forger*, its successor the Yak-41, and Ka-27 *Helix* helicopter. An air wing of this composition leaves the new carrier deficient in one important respect, airborne early warning (AEW).

At present, the combat radius of the new carriers is limited by the range of shipboard and land-based radars. The An-74 *Madcap* AEW aircraft has been suggested in order to fill this gap, but at over 75,000 pounds maximum take-off weight and a 104 foot wingspan, the *Madcap* is too large for continuous carrier operations.<sup>9</sup> An AEW variant of the Ka-29 *Helix* helicopter is a better candidate for the job. Soviet authors have written approvingly of the Royal Navy's use of helicopters in this role.<sup>10</sup> True AEW capability on the new carriers, however, hinges on the development of a long-range fixed wing aircraft similar to the U.S. Navy's E-2C *Hawkeye*. To support such an aircraft, the Soviets will have to equip their carriers with steam catapults, a capability that appears to be on the Navy's horizon.

Catapult-assist take-off systems are in use and being developed at Saki airfield in the Ukrainian republic on the

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<sup>9</sup>Floyd D. Kennedy, "Soviet Maritime Aviation, Matrix Management, and the New Soviet Aircraft Carrier," unpublished.

<sup>10</sup>See "Long-range Radar Detection Helicopters in the Ship Antimissile Defense System," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1984): 86-87, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

Black Sea.<sup>11</sup> The Soviets have hinted that forthcoming carriers will be equipped with steam catapults.<sup>12</sup> According to Western estimates, the *Varyag* and follow-on units will have steam catapults.<sup>13</sup> If this turns out to be true, the Navy would be able to operate a fixed wing AEW aircraft from its carriers. The fleet could then carry its own AEW umbrella, cover a larger ocean area, and sail with a greater degree of independence at, theoretically, greater distances from the coast. Deployment of AEW aircraft aboard the carriers would be a strategically significant addition to the Navy's capabilities, one that would add to its offensive potential.

If present trends continue, by the year 2000 the Soviet Navy could have at sea four 65,000 ton plus aircraft carriers and four 43,000 ton VSTOL Kiev class carriers. The *Kuznetsov* is expected to make its first deployment as part of the Northern Fleet in 1991 and the *Varyag* is due to start sea trials sometime in 1992.<sup>14</sup> It is expected that the

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<sup>11</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990, 30.

<sup>12</sup>Captain First Rank S. Kozyrev comments that "to support the launch of long-range radar aircraft, it may become necessary to return to the classic (in the traditional sense) design using steam catapults." *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2 (1990): 14.

<sup>13</sup>Norman Polmar, "Soviet Seapower," *Air Force Magazine* June (1990): 51; Norman Polmar, personal interview, 29 March 1991.

<sup>14</sup>According to one report, the *Kuznetsov* will be "fully combat ready" in the "near future." Colonel P. Maslov, "The Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union *Kuznetsov*," *Krasnaya zvezda* 16 February 1991: 2, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

*Ul'yanovsk* will commence sea trials in 1996.<sup>15</sup> A fourth unit is anticipated, but as of this writing has not been laid down.<sup>16</sup> Carriers operate best in pairs and it is expected that the Soviets will do just that, with two each deployed to the Northern and Pacific Fleets.

When considering the sophisticated hardware on the *Kuznetsov* class and that currently being built into the *Ul'yanovsk*, one has to question the Soviet ability to maintain and operate such ships. This is significant because it will determine how long it will take to integrate the new carriers into fleet operations as the major element of a revised naval strategy. Unlike American carriers where young enlisted confidently direct million-dollar aircraft on a pitching deck and man the engineering spaces, the new Soviet carrier is operated by a totally professional crew, one that was no doubt very difficult to assemble. According to one Soviet commentator who toured the ship, the *Kuznetsov* is a work of "technical perfection" with equipment and personnel comparable to U.S. carriers.<sup>17</sup> Much to the contrary, an inside source paints a picture of dangerous technical imperfection and questionable combat performance. According to an editorial in

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<sup>15</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990, 27.

<sup>16</sup>Norman Polmar, personal interview, 8 March 1991.

<sup>17</sup>Colonel V. Izgarshev, "Three Meetings With the Admiral: Reflections on Board a Heavy Aircraft-Carrying Cruiser," *Pravda* 2 January 1991: 2, trans, FBIS-SOV-003, 4 January 1991, 29.

the Soviet monthly *Ogonek* written by "an officer from the first Soviet aircraft carrier," [rank not given] the *Kuznetsov* is the "fruit of a tremendous fraud on a national scale" and that the conditions of the weapon systems, engines, and aviation are "lamentable."<sup>18</sup> The officer states that many of his peers on board are prepared to testify that the carrier is unable to contribute realistically to the defense of Soviet shores. While these are two rather obscure accounts of what conditions are like aboard the *Kuznetsov* and should be treated as such, they do suggest the possibility that the Navy's fledgling large-deck carrier force may not be all that it is cracked up to be. To be sure, it will be at least ten years before the Soviet carrier force becomes fully operational.

Based on the above capabilities, the *Kuznetsov* appears to be well-suited for defensive missions, but with enough flexibility to conduct limited offensive operations. Prospective missions of the carriers will be based on the prevalent view of the nature of war. Consistent with the Soviet trend toward conventional means and the protracted war scenarios that are floating around the Kremlin, the military apparently perceived the need for the large-deck carriers in the mid to late 1970s in order to provide combat stability, the means to counter U.S. carrier strikes for extended periods of time. The General Staff came to the conclusion that:

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<sup>18</sup>K. Bolshakov, *Ogonek* No. 46 November (1990): 4, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

the ability of modern ships to remain long at sea far from their bases...is inseparably tied to the need to provide constant escort for warship task groups by fighters that use aircraft-carrying ships as their floating bases.<sup>19</sup>

Along with present capabilities, this past motivation is reason to conclude that the primary role of the new Soviet aircraft carrier is fleet air defense. But by itself, "fleet air defense" is not a conclusive indicator of offensive or defensive tendencies in Soviet naval strategy. The question must be asked: in defense of which strategic missions and under what conditions of the scope and location of the battle are the *Kuznetsov* and follow-on units intended to operate?

The military responds to this question with the blanket answer that the new carriers are wholly consistent with a defensive doctrine. Admiral Chernavin comments on their intended role within the new defense-conditioned strategic environment:

The VTOL deck-borne aircraft [of the *Kiev*] were attack aircraft, but now we need to have fighters on our carriers—that is, aircraft to assume the defensive role. Therefore, when people ask today whether the construction of aircraft-carrying ships contravenes our defensive doctrine, I reply: no. We see their main role as platforms for fighter aircraft able to provide long-range cover for our vessels when shore-based fighters are unable to help. This defensive function is enshrined in

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<sup>19</sup>V.A. Dygalo, "Air Defense of Ship Groupings," *Voennyye Mysl'* October (1978), in Brian Ranft and Geoffrey Till, *The Sea in Soviet Strategy* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1989) 117; See also Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, "Aircraft Carriers in the Postwar Period," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 6 (1983): 91-100.

the new aircraft carrier *Tbilisi* [Kuznetsov].<sup>20</sup>

It is significant to note that Chernavin uses the term "aircraft carrier" which has been shunned by military leaders in an effort to distinguish them from "offensive" U.S. carriers. A few days later, a correction was issued in *Pravda* that listed the *Kuznetsov* as part of a "category of heavy aircraft-carrying cruisers and not within that of aircraft carriers."<sup>21</sup> Commenting on the success of American carrier operations in the Pacific during WW II, Chernavin states that:

High mobility, large combat radius, considerable striking power and the capability to use its own forces to support the conduct of reconnaissance and achievement of air superiority in the area where operations were being conducted caused the success of the use of aircraft carrier formations against shipping.<sup>22</sup>

He goes on to cite the high loss of German surface combatants due to "the absence of aircraft carriers." These comments portend a more limited scope of combat for the new carriers in certain areas where the fleet is performing a strategic mission and not in areas determined by the carrier's capabilities. This stands in contrast to the U.S. Navy where the actions of surface ships and submarines are largely

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<sup>20</sup>Interview with Admiral V.N. Chernavin, "Commentary by Fleet Admiral V.N. Chernavin, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy," *Pravda* 19 October 1989: 3, trans. FBIS-SOV-89-204, 24 October 1989, 91.

<sup>21</sup>*Pravda* 22 October 1989, trans. Norman Polmar, "Continuing Warship Construction," *Proceedings* January (1990): 134.

<sup>22</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Struggle for the Sea Lanes of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1990), trans. JPRS-UMA-90-007, 23 March 1990, 63.

determined by the movement and mission of the carrier. The Soviet Navy appears to have taken the opposite approach basing the operations of the carrier on the missions of other fleet units. In other words, the new Soviet carrier is meant to be more of a shield than the tip of the spear.

In the defensive role, the *Kuznetsov* class and follow-on units would operate in support of SSBN bastions and an extended perimeter defense mission. In both instances, the scope of the battle would be limited to the threat axis and the location would be mainly in home waters. The objective would be to achieve limited or area dependent air superiority. SSBN bastions in portions of the Arctic Ocean, the Barents Sea, Sea of Japan, and Sea of Okhotsk would require air defense against Western ASW forces.

The *Kuznetsov* class would also enhance the Navy's perimeter defense mission. Their role would be to provide surveillance and early warning of incoming U.S. carrier battle groups. The Su-27 and Mig-29 would be used to engage American aircraft at extended ranges from the shore. The standard estimate of the number of U.S. carriers that would press to carry the fight to the homeland is around four in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. Though this is a worst-case scenario, the projected size of the Soviet carrier force would be inadequate to meet this challenge and would be limited to denying certain areas to Western forces instead of going after the more comprehensive sea control.. It is also reasonable to

assume that, given the Soviet emphasis on SLCMs, the *Kuznetsov* class could be forward deployed against SLCM platforms along the reaches of the defense perimeter. In both instances, the provision for fleet air defense in support of close aboard SSBN bastions and as part of the maritime defense perimeter is logically consistent with the theme of a defensive doctrine.

Though advertised as the defensive doctrine incarnate, the new Soviet aircraft carrier is capable of performing limited offensive missions. In the past, the Soviets pointed to the lack of carriers in their fleet as evidence of its "defensive" orientation. As late as 1983, Admiral Amelko, then Deputy Chief of the General Staff and today a curious critic of large-deck carriers, declared:

We can mention the lack of vessels like the North American aircraft carriers as an indication of the defensive character of the Soviet Navy.<sup>23</sup>

With the arrival of the *Kuznetsov* six years later, Admiral Amelko's comments stand as a warning to Western analysts. The Navy now has the *option* of limited offensive operations. Large-scale or distant offensive operations during a protracted conventional war would be very difficult given the numerical disparity with the U.S. Navy. The carriers could improve the Soviet Navy's capability to carry out two offensive missions, amphibious power projection and operations against the sea lines of communication (anti-sloc). Depending

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<sup>23</sup>Admiral N.N. Amelko, *Narodna Armiya* 14 June 1983, in Ranft and Till 117.



upon the perspective, U.S. or Soviet, these missions can be classified as either offensive or defensive.

In the case of amphibious landings, the Soviets may attempt to seize the flanks of Norway, the entrance to the Baltic, and key chokepoints in the Pacific such as the Kurile islands in order to stop Western ASW forces on their way to SSBN bastions in accordance with the Maritime Strategy.<sup>24</sup> Fighters in the *Kuznetsov's* air wing would be capable in this support role and, even more so, the ground attack Su-25 and attack-configured Mig-29 could be used.

The priority of the anti-sloc mission is unclear amidst the current state of flux in Soviet strategy. This mission will be addressed in the next chapter. However, it is pertinent to mention at this point that the *Kuznetsov* class and follow-on units would indirectly improve Soviet efforts to threaten NATO shipping lanes by providing air defense for forward offensive operations and, more importantly, by freeing up attack submarines previously allocated to defending SSBN bastions.

Consideration of the potential offensive missions of the new aircraft carriers is limited to the realm of scenarios and what is possible given the aircraft that are currently being flight tested. The Soviets have erected an edifice of defensive declarations that would seem to forestall even the

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<sup>24</sup>"Soviet Strategy: reaffirming the bastion doctrine," *Janes Defence Weekly* 27 January 1990: 147.

option of using the carriers in the offensive. References to forward carrier operations in the literature are nonexistent. Military leaders, normally reluctant to discuss strategic planning, have been quick to dismiss charges of offensive intent.<sup>25</sup> On the whole, the *institutchiki* are critical of the Kuznetsov and even moreso of plans that would contravene the now sacred defensive doctrine. Ironically, though, it is from a prominent civilian specialist that a crack in the Soviet edifice of deniability emerges.

Dr. Andrei Kokoshin, a Deputy Director of IUSAC and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Soviet Scientists in Defense of Peace Against the Nuclear Threat, came to the United States in September 1990 to attend a conference at the Center for Naval Analyses. He is publicly opposed to the carrier program and in one of the panel discussions described it as the result of past decisions. However, in private discussions with a CNA official Kokoshin was far less critical of the carriers than he was when serving on the panel.<sup>26</sup> When presented with the point that equipping the next carriers with steam catapults, hence AEW aircraft, would enhance their offensive potential, Kokoshin replied that they were "too

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<sup>25</sup>See V.N. Chernavin, "Guarding the Homeland's Sea Frontiers," *Soviet Military Review* July (1986): 6; Colonel General of Aviation Georgi A. Kuznetsov, interview by Oleg Povetkin, "Nad morem krylataya gvardiya," [Winged Guard Over the Sea] *Nedelya* 33.8 (11-17 August 1986): 19, trans. Floyd D. Kennedy (CNA); See also Chernavin's October 1989 remarks in *Pravda*, pages 134,135.

<sup>26</sup>Floyd D. Kennedy, personal interview, 4 January 1991.

expensive to be used in the defensive role alone." He went on to state that the new carriers needed to be more flexible in order to operate in areas other than coastal waters and contiguous seas. When presented with the scenario of fighters from Soviet carriers supporting offensive bomber strikes beyond the range of land-based escorts and asked if the U.S. had reason to be concerned, Kokoshin simply replied, "yes."

Coming from someone such as Kokoshin, who is supposedly at the pinnacle of New Political Thinking, these comments on the offensive potential of Soviet carriers reveal what could possibly be the true intentions of the military leadership. This link to the military is tenuous at best, but it stands to reason that if one of the most prominent new thinkers views offensive carrier operations as an element of future strategy then so does the General Staff. Though it would not make sense for one of the *institutchiki* to be in the loop, Kokoshin speaks as someone who is quite well informed. While it is important to keep such evidence in perspective, 'only a crack in the edifice of otherwise defensive pronouncements', this informal exchange with a leading new thinker shows how flexible the missions of the new Soviet carriers are regarded under a defensive doctrine.

The prospective missions of the *Kuznetsov* and follow-on units will assume a primarily defensive character with the capability to conduct limited offensive operations always an option. The sheer weight of the Navy's strategic tradition,

or lack thereof, would suggest that the carriers are going to be used for fleet air defense in support of operations in home waters and at extended ranges in the role of perimeter defense and early warning. Also, the tenets of New Political Thinking, mutual security being foremost, would seem to prohibit any sort of power projection role for the *Kuznetsov* class in peacetime. More evidence of offensive intent, like that described by Dr. Kokoshin, will have to await the completion and deployment of the next three large-deck carriers. However, the hope that the carrier program can be cancelled is fueling a debate between civilian and military officials that, by a long shot, could preclude the need to watch and wait for a sufficient answer.

#### DYNAMICS OF THE CIVIL-MILITARY DEBATE

The carrier program is the subject of one of the more frequent and intense debates between civilian and military officials in the struggle to conform to new doctrinal requirements. The carrier is held up by the military as a strategic necessity whose value at sea outweighs the need for economic reform at home. There are a number of civilian new thinkers who contest this position and hope that by challenging the military on the deployment of aircraft carriers plans for a third and fourth unit will be scrapped. They are concerned about the carrier's offensive potential and question the military on whether the large-deck carrier is

appropriate within a new defensive outlook. Perhaps the best example of the dynamics of the carrier debate is an exchange that occurred in the literature in the Winter of 1989-90. In the December issue of *New Times*, a Soviet weekly of world affairs, two civilian specialists, Andrei Kortunov and Igor Malashenko, presented what is the standard opposing viewpoint.<sup>27</sup> In February 1990, Captain First Rank Kozyrev delivered a terse reply to Kortunov and Malashenko in the pages of *Morskoi Sbornik*.<sup>28</sup> The following is an account of the debate.

Kortunov and Malashenko criticize the carrier program as an outdated symmetric response policy that is both too expensive and inconsistent with the principles of New Political Thinking. The new carrier is said to be unnecessary given the differing economic potentials, geostrategic positions, and military traditions of the U.S. and Soviet Union. Kortunov and Malashenko's criticism centers around the original conception of reasonable sufficiency [*razumnoi dostatochnosti*] that rejects quantitative parity in favor of "new" internally defined security requirements.<sup>29</sup> The authors state:

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<sup>27</sup>Andrei Kortunov and Igor Malashenko, "Tbilisi, Riga, and the Rest," *New Times* [English version] No. 51 December (1989): 26-28.

<sup>28</sup>Captain First Rank S. Kozyrev, "Tbilisi, Riga, and so on..." *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2 (1990): 13-17, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>29</sup>See Chapter One, pages 22,25.

The principles of reasonable defense sufficiency and the defensive Soviet doctrine must act as guarantees against attempts to compete with the Americans in all directions.

According to the authors, continued deployment of the new carriers would be an ill-fated decision for reasons political, economic, and strategic. Politically, the forward deployment of carriers along the coasts of foreign nations would violate the principle of mutual security. "Showing the flag in remote regions of the world," they say, is bound to cause trouble. In economic terms, the costs of the carriers outweigh the benefits and to continue is to fall prey to U.S. efforts to draw the country into a ruinous arms race. The acceptable mission of the carriers is much like what Chernavin gave in *Pravda*. Kortunov and Malashenko state that the carrier should be deployed at ranges upward of 1000 kilometers (km) in order to defend against U.S. carriers and SLCMs. This would involve two main areas: the Barents Sea and the Sea of Japan. With this role, only the Su-27 *Flanker* and Mig-29 *Fulcrum* would be necessary. They question the inclusion of the Su-25 *Frogfoot* as an offensive weapon. The carrier is said to be vulnerable to modern weapons and better replaced by submarines and aviation. On the whole, they view the deployment of large-deck carriers as evidence of inertia in the development of naval strategy that would still send the fleet far out to sea:

Deployment of the *Tbilisi* class [Kuznetsov] ships, in our view, attests to the fact that the Soviet naval strategy remains oriented on the possibility of a protracted non-nuclear large-scale naval conflict when the enemy will try to break through to the Soviet strategic centers ashore. It is presumed that main battles will unfold on

the high seas, as was the case during WW2 in the Pacific.

Captain Kozyrev's article is the most detailed defense of the Soviet carrier program to date.<sup>30</sup> The theme of his rebuttal is that carriers are a most efficient strategic essential that are worthy of continued funding. First, he is careful to distinguish the Kuznetsov "heavy aircraft carrying cruiser" from the allegedly offensive U.S. Nimitz class. As for the cost, the carrier program is said to be more efficient than constructing additional surface ships. He claims that:

from a military-economic standpoint [the Kuznetsov class] will reduce the cost of accomplishing missions" and that the carriers are "one of the most effective, future-oriented, and solidly-based directions in our Navy's development...to build and commission, for example, submarines or missile-carrying aircraft without supporting them with air cover would be a really imprudent waste of money.

Strategically, Kozyrev differs with Kortunov and Malashenko on the nature of the threat:

To think that it [the threat] is limited to a few "strategic centers" on the coast, fleet basing points and naval forces at sea or in port, is wrong. The assumption that the enemy's fleet must closely approach our shores to achieve his designated tasks is a similarly deep miscalculation.

He states that the carriers role in the perimeter defense mission would be to engage Western strike forces in regions outside of home waters beyond reach of land-based fighters and before the enemy can launch aircraft or SLCMs. Apart from this approach, Kozyrev states that it would be "impossible"

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<sup>30</sup>See Scott R. Atkinson, *Civilian-Military Differences on Soviet Aircraft Carrier Deployment* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analyses, August 1990).

for the Navy to defend Soviet shores. This forward defensive orientation is a significant continuity from the Gorshkov era and is consistent with Chernavin's view.<sup>31</sup> Kozyrev concludes by stating that "heavy aircraft-carrying cruisers" are an essential part of the USSR's "interests as a great sea power."

Captain Kozyrev's arguments correlate with those of the Navy leadership and the General Staff. They are no doubt the same ones that are used by the military leadership to convince members of the Politburo and the Defense Council that carrier construction should continue as planned despite the huge expense. Admiral Chernavin, already cited for his argument that the *Kuznetsov* is inherently defensive, portrays them as a necessity even under austere conditions. In the context of the decision to forego aircraft carrier construction in the 1950s, he remarks that they are "the most costly ships of all, we could not afford to build one."<sup>32</sup> What Chernavin may have been thinking, but left unsaid, is that not only was a large-deck carrier too expensive in the 1950s, but it was not viewed with a sense of urgency by the General Staff as an essential component of national strategy. In the 1990s, things are different. The fact that the Soviets are devoting such a large amount of resources to building aircraft carriers in the

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<sup>31</sup>See Chapter 3, pages 82-84.

<sup>32</sup>Interview with Admiral V.N. Chernavin 90; See also Captain First Rank V. Zaborskiy, "Rejoinder: What An Opinion Reflects," *Krasnaya zvezda* 22 December 1989: 3, trans. FBIS-SOV-89-247, 27 December 1989, 106-7.



face of enormous economic problems and reductions in the military budget as a whole can mean only one thing: the General Staff views the carrier as an essential part of the future strategic employment of the fleet. General Moiseyev has given the carrier program his weighty support and gotten personally involved in the debate:

Some publications raise the question of whether, given the limited nature of our funds, it is sensible to resort to similar actions - to build heavy aircraft carriers and large nuclear submarines and other expensive equipment. To me the answer is clear: The miser pays twice. Here, as in the development of space, you cannot lag behind, you will not catch up later.<sup>33</sup>

Moiseyev apparently concedes involvement in an arms race with the United States in the deployment of carriers, a policy that is consistent with his definition of sufficiency as the maintenance of a "reliable defense."<sup>34</sup> This line of reasoning on the General Staff suggests that there is a bottom line motivation to the continued development of large-deck aircraft carriers.

Once again careful to steer clear of mirror imaging in analyzing the intentions behind Soviet carrier development, the bottom line apparent from Moiseyev's comments and other sources is that since the U.S. Navy maintains a large number of carriers and will do so well into the next century then the Soviet Navy needs to do the same even though it sails within

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Chief of the General Staff M.A. Moiseyev, "Argumenty generalnogo shtaba," *Izvestiya* 23 February 1990: 3, trans. in Atkinson 6.

<sup>34</sup>See Chapter 1, page 22.

a different strategic paradigm.<sup>35</sup> If this is actually the case, then the mechanics of Soviet military planning have not changed that much. The following appeared in the officially sanctioned newspaper *Red Star* and is indicative of the military's symmetric response approach to carrier development:

The strike force of the American Navy is based on aircraft carriers, and ships of other classes support their activities. This has been confirmed once more by the actions in the Persian Gulf. The basis of the Soviet Navy is missile vessels, but, without aircraft carriers, they possess insufficient combat reliability. Therefore the country needs a navy which is balanced in strike and defense capabilities because the U.S. has no intention in the immediate future of cutting its aircraft carrier strike groups.<sup>36</sup>

The next question concerns whether the *Kievs* and four large-deck carriers will be enough to counter at least twelve U.S. carriers by the turn of the century. It would appear not if future Soviet naval strategy is to involve operations at extended ranges in opposition to some form of a forward U.S. Maritime Strategy.

Based on the character of Soviet Navy's ambitions to sail with carriers and the enduring traditions that would keep the fleet home under a combined arms strategy, it is highly unlikely that the new Soviet carrier and follow-on units will be deployed with offensive intentions. The task of fleet air defense, as reflected in the *Kuznetsov's* air wing of mainly

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<sup>35</sup>See V'yunenko et. al. 92.

<sup>36</sup>Vice Admiral (Ret.) Ye. Shitikov, "Aircraft-Carrying Ships Are Necessary," *Krasnaya zvezda* 19 February 1991: 2, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

fighter-interceptors, will be the primary role of the carrier in Soviet naval strategy. However, the flexibility provided by the ground attack role of the Su-25, or any future carrier-capable attack aircraft for that matter, and the anticipated addition of AEW capability gives the fleet the option of carrying out offensive forays in support of the land battle. There is always the possibility that should New Political Thinking become a thing of the past as part of a military/conservative power play the aircraft carrier will become the centerpiece of an aggressive foreign policy in the Third World. But a commanding role for the military in domestic affairs is unlikely to trigger a revanche in Soviet foreign policy since whoever inherits what is left of the USSR after Gorbachev will definitely need a peaceful international environment in order to pick up the pieces and restore some semblance of order. For now, among the current Kremlin leadership, the new aircraft carrier is an attractive and arguably necessary symbol of superpower status, much like the space program.

It can be concluded from the absence of a slowdown in aircraft carrier construction that such ships are considered an *essential* element of Soviet strategy under a defensive doctrine. The course of the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot* towards the year 2000 will be swayed by the addition of Western style carriers. Just how much so will depend upon a number of emerging trends and enduring traditions in the fleet's overall strategic missions, an area to which this study will now turn.

## CHAPTER 6

## Soviet Naval Missions: Trends and Traditions

By design, this study presents Soviet naval missions within the complex system of Soviet national security planning (See Figure 5, page 135). The final step in the deductive process followed by this study is to make projections concerning these missions, the actual charts that will guide the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot* towards the year 2000.

Soviet naval missions are divided into two categories: vital and alternative. Vital missions are ones that the Soviet political and military leadership perceive as essential to ensuring national security. In the allusive style of Soviet military writings, vital missions are designated as "strategic," meaning that they have the potential to "alter the course and outcome of war." Alternative implies a lower priority involving tradeoffs in terms of economics and their overall strategic importance. The objective in this chapter is to determine the fitness of different aspects of each mission for strategy under a defensive doctrine. Like the sometimes synergic, sometimes opposing forces of wind and current, recognition of emerging trends and enduring traditions and, most importantly, their dialectic interaction is central to this analysis of Soviet naval missions. A word of caution to the reader is necessary before delving into the

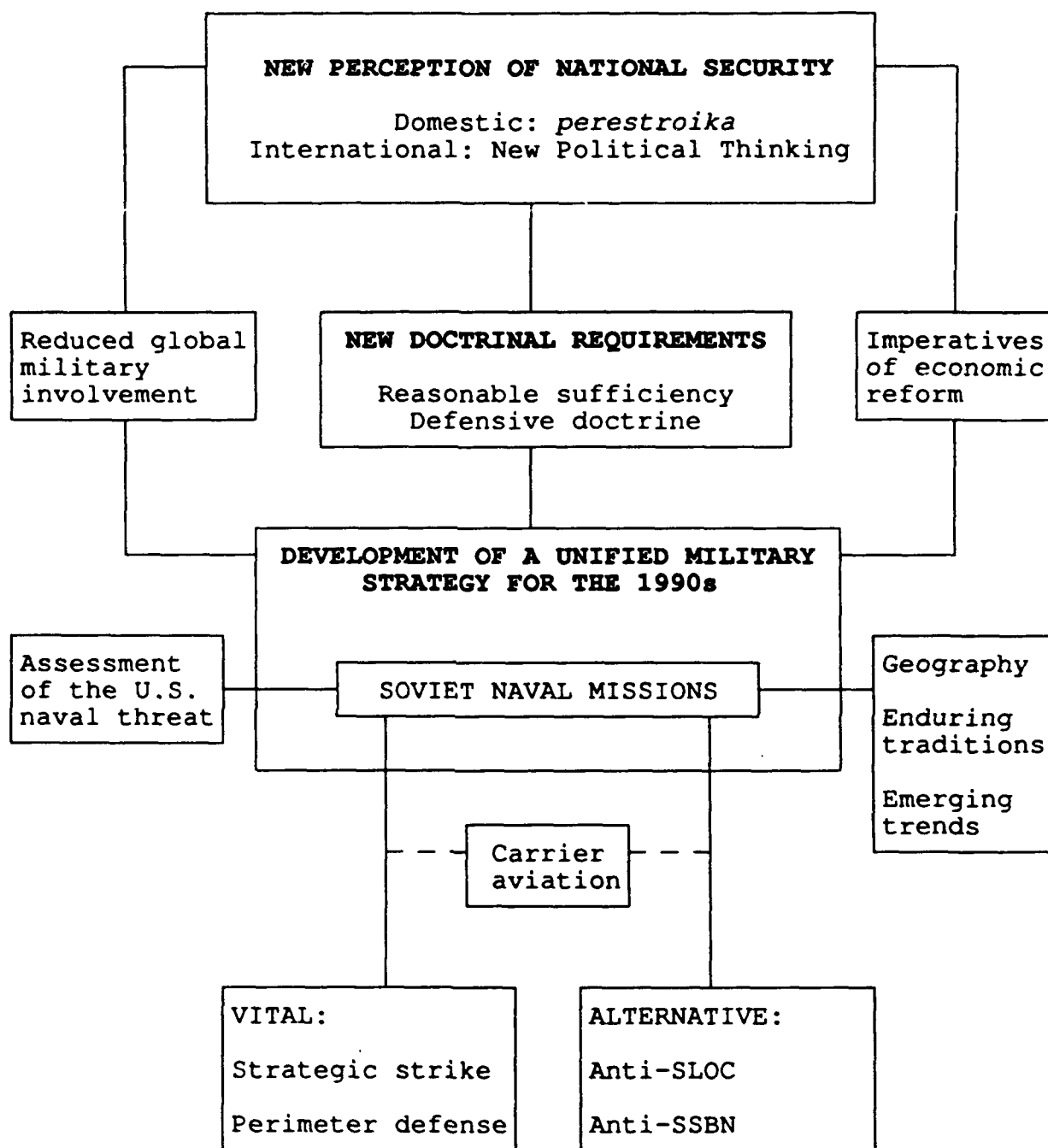


Figure 5: Systemic Context of Soviet Naval Missions

character of future missions. Distinctions between defensive and offensive options at sea are by no means clear and have become even more complicated in modern naval warfare. The ultimate character of the Soviet Navy's missions depends on the political circumstances that will send it into battle. The goal of this study is to evaluate the relative emphasis that Soviet civilian and military officials place on both offensive and defensive operations.

The Soviet Navy's projected mission structure is as follows: *Vital* (1) strategic strike; (2) perimeter defense; *Alternative* (3) Anti-SLOC; (4) Anti-SSBN.

#### STRATEGIC STRIKE

Strategic strike has been the primary mission of the Soviet Navy since the mid 1960s. A shift in the Soviet Navy's strategic focus from targeting Western SSBNs to the developing a decisive strategic nuclear strike capability was the likely result of decisions made at the 23rd Party Congress in 1966.<sup>1</sup> The deployment of Yankee class SSBNs in the late 1960s meant that for the first time the Soviets could close within

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<sup>1</sup>The high priority of the strategic strike mission is confirmed by the fact that, since 1966, over forty percent of fleet construction has been devoted to building SSBNs. Brian Ranft and Geoffrey Till, *The Sea in Soviet Strategy* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1989) 188; Jan S. Breemer, "The Soviet Navy's SSBN Bastions: Evidence, Inference, and Alternative Scenarios," *RUSI Journal* 13 March 1985: 18.

striking distance of the continental United States.<sup>2</sup> The strategic strike mission took on a new look in the early 1970s when the *Delta* class was added to the fleet's arsenal. The *Delta* represented a quantum leap in Soviet technology in that its longer range missiles could strike U.S. territory from protected home water sanctuaries or "bastions." Though the Soviets appear to have ruled out, for planning purposes, victory in a nuclear world war, nuclear deterrence remains a vital part of Soviet strategy under the new defensive doctrine. Therefore, there is every indication that the strategic strike mission will continue as the Navy's primary vital mission well into the 1990s.

In the spirit of New Political Thinking on defense, the most important objective of military strategy for the 1990s is the prevention rather than execution of nuclear war. The Soviets will need a stable international environment to sort out domestic problems. To achieve this objective, a credible nuclear deterrent expressed in a capable SSBN force is viewed as a necessary element of strategy. The strategic strike mission is generally consistent with the trend in Soviet military thinking towards conventional means for the reason that SSBNs are needed to deter escalation and keep the

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<sup>2</sup>During that period, Gorshkov declared: "Nuclear powered submarines equipped with ballistic missiles have now become the main force of the Navy." S.G. Gorshkov, *Izvestiya*, 31 July 1966, in James M. McConnell, "The Gorshkov Articles, the New Gorshkov Book, and their relation to Policy," in Michael McGwire et. al, *Soviet Naval Influence: Domestic and Foreign Dimensions* (New York: Praeger, 1977) 570-1.

conflict on the conventional level. Though Soviet views on the nature of war no longer focus on "limited" nuclear war scenarios, trends on land portend a much greater role for the Navy in providing a stable nuclear deterrent at sea.

The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the 1987 INF Treaty, and a pending CFE agreement have all resulted in the heightened security concerns among the military leadership. The correlation of nuclear forces, while negotiated to an acceptable level, still have Soviet strategists looking at the map and wondering how to fight a purely conventional war. This situation is likely to develop in the wake of a strict CFE agreement where the ability of the ground forces to conduct a conventional war to their liking would, in effect, take the middle rungs out of the escalation ladder and create a "crisis gap" that, theoretically, would make nuclear war more of an option.<sup>3</sup> Along with existing restrictions on theater nuclear weapons, the conventional stand down in Europe would seem to suggest to the General Staff that nuclear deterrence is becoming more important. This is where the Navy's strategic strike mission comes into play. As a non-territorial force, fleet SSBNs could very well be asked to take up the slack in maintaining a reliable deterrent umbrella over Europe. The objective would be to deter escalation from the sea so that the ground forces can conduct a conventional campaign on land. Though the dynamics of escalation are

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<sup>3</sup>Floyd D. Kennedy, personal interview, 4 January 1991.



certainly not this simple, such reasoning does indicate a stronger combined-arms role for the Navy in the strategic strike mission.

According to the latest U.S. Naval Intelligence assessment, the circumstances are ripe for the Soviet Navy to assume greater responsibility for maintaining a balance in the correlation of nuclear forces:

The doctrinal focus on nuclear deterrence - the by-product of conventional forces reduction - has maintained and, perhaps, elevated the importance of the Soviet nuclear triad and the newly modernized ballistic missile submarine forces...There is no sign that the Soviets have changed the overall operating requirements for their SSBN force.<sup>4</sup>

So while on the surface it might seem that arms control agreements and the Soviet emphasis on conventional warfighting would tend to lessen the importance of the Navy's strategic strike mission, the converse is true. The Soviets still attach great importance to the deterrent value of the SSBN force as a means of altering the course and outcome of a future war.

The Soviet literature indicates that the strategic strike mission is viewed by military officials and the overwhelming majority of new thinkers alike as a vital element of unified strategy under a defensive doctrine. When asked if the traditional priority of the strategic strike mission had

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<sup>4</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 7 March 1991, 12, 28; Admiral Brooks stated in his 1990 statement: "The primary mission of the Soviet Navy remains the fielding and protection of its strategic SSBN force and the destruction or neutralization of enemy nuclear forces at sea." 14 March 1990, 22.

changed under current conditions, Admiral Chernavin responded:

Of course, the Navy still has the task you call "traditionally the first task." However, in my opinion, it should not be separated from the general conception of the purpose and use of the fleet's forces, or isolated from the other tasks at the top of the list. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that preparedness for a retaliatory strategic strike is a necessary measure for the Soviet Navy.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to confirming strategic strike as the first priority, Chernavin alludes to the fact that the rest of the fleet's missions are closely integrated with the operations of the SSBN force. This is the exact conception that Gorshkov maintained in balancing the fleet for the first task of operating against the shore. As for future naval strategy, Gorshkov evidently prescribes the strategic strike mission as the most important consideration:

The fleet now has ships of different classes and it has its nuclear-powered missile submarines as its main strike force that really determines the necessary level of our state's naval power.<sup>6</sup>

This comment is telling in that it predates reasonable sufficiency doctrine suggesting a strong continuity in the General Staff's view towards nuclear strategy from the Gorshkov era.

While the authors of *The Navy* list the mission of

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<sup>5</sup>V.N. Chernavin, interview, "Chernavin Responds," 76.

<sup>6</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, interview, "Raising Combat Readiness and Vigilance, Skillfully Utilizing Accumulated Experience," *Military-Historical Journal*, July 1985, trans. JPRS-UMA-85-060, 12 November 1985, 74-5; See also K. Stalbo, "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and Employment of the Navy," *Morskoi Sbornik*, No.4 (1981): 25.

"repelling an enemy aerospace attack" first in their prescription for the 1990s, the SSBN strike mission is a close second, if not of equal importance. They write:

The Navy's primary efforts in the set of armed forces' missions to suppress the enemy military-economic potential will be concentrated on destroying his industrial, energy, and administrative-political centers; naval bases and ports; command-and-control and communications installations; and other important strategic installations. These efforts will be realized by delivering nuclear missile strikes with ballistic and cruise missiles from naval strategic weapon platforms, the principal ones being missile submarines of strategic designation.<sup>7</sup>

While discussion of the strategic strike mission in *The Navy* focuses more on nuclear warfighting than on deterrence, it is sufficient to say that V'yunenko et. al. attach a high priority to the SSBN force. Along with this consensus on the importance of the strategic strike mission within the military, there is also strong support among civilian officials on the need to retain a sufficient sea-based deterrent.

Though the Russian language has no equivalent for the English "deterrence," the *institutchiki* now refer to this concept by name in discussions of how to tailor the nuclear dimension of Soviet strategy to new doctrinal requirements. One of the explicit requirements of reasonable sufficiency doctrine is the ability to "inflict unacceptable damage upon the enemy" based on "qualitative" or rough numerical parity in

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<sup>7</sup>V'yunenko et. al. 236.

strategic nuclear weapon systems.<sup>8</sup> There is general support among civilian specialists for the Navy's role in accomplishing this objective. Calling nuclear weapons the "great equalizer" between powerful navies and relatively weaker ones, Georgi Sturua of IMEMO lends his support to the strategic strike mission in stating that the:

...principal task of the Navy should be to deter a nuclear war by maintaining the capability, even after the first strike, to cause unacceptable damage to the enemy [emphasis added].<sup>91</sup>

Another prominent new thinker, Alexi Arbatov, has stated that the SSBN force is a vital mission for the Soviet Navy and that their deployment in well-protected bastions is an acceptable method under conditions of defensive sufficiency.<sup>10</sup> The objective necessity of maintaining a formidable sea-based deterrent is a significant point of agreement between the *institutchiki* and military leaders. With this kind of support, the Navy leadership is in a good position to fend off proposals to cut conventional forces with the argument that

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<sup>8</sup>See Edward L. Warner III, "New Thinking and old realities in Soviet defence policy," *Survival* 31 January/February (1989): 20-22; A.G. Arbatov, A.A. Vasil'yev, and A.A. Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability," *SSha: Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* 9 (1987): 3-13; A. Arbatov and A. Savel'yev, "The Control and Communications System as a Factor of Strategic Stability," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya* 12 (1987): 12-23.

<sup>9</sup>Georgi Sturua, "A View of the Navy Through the Prism of *Perestroyka*," 42. It should be noted that, coincident with the conservative resurgence in Soviet politics, Sturua has positioned himself closer to the Yeltsin camp.

<sup>10</sup>Alexi Arbatov, "How much defence is sufficient?" *International Affairs* (Moscow) April (1989): 41; See Arbatov's comment in Chapter 1, note 24.

they are needed to protect SSBN bastions.

Having established the primacy of the strategic strike mission for the 1990s, the next step is to look at the manner in which the Soviets are most likely to carry out this mission: bastion defense. First, the origins of the bastion model will be evaluated in order to determine its fitness for strategy under a defensive doctrine. Next, there are three possible developments that could alter the character of bastion defense and the strategic strike mission.

The bastion model was perceived by Western analysts in the early 1970s in an attempt to explain trends in the employment of the Soviet SSBN force after the introduction of the *Delta* class. Armed with the 4500 nautical mile range SS-N-8 missile, the *Delta* boats were capable of striking U.S. territory from within Soviet home waters. Capabilities were confirmed by deployment patterns as the first units of the *Delta* class were not observed in transit to and from established Yankee patrol areas off of the U.S. East and West coasts.<sup>11</sup> The OPTEMPO of the Yankee and *Delta* boats led some analysts to conclude that the Soviets had decided to pull back their SSBNs to home waters where they could be more easily protected from Western ASW forces:

It was deduced that the deployment of the long-range SS-N-8 reflected a Soviet decision to safeguard their SSBNs from Western anti-submarine forces by limiting their

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<sup>11</sup>Alan C. Westphal, *The Bastion Model as a Predictor of the Role of the Soviet Navy in Strategy* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School Master's Thesis, March 1989) 8.

deployment to sea areas within easy reach of protective anti-submarine measures. The protected areas, presumably the Arctic Ocean, the northern portion of the Norwegian Sea, and the Sea of Okhotsk were labelled "sanctuaries," "havens," or "bastions."<sup>12</sup>

The bastion concept was first openly discussed at a seminar at Dalhousie University in 1973. Here, prominent British analyst Michael MccGwire stated that the *Delta* class was a "SLBM system with sufficient range to be able to strike at North America from the comparative safety of home fleet areas."<sup>13</sup> Because there are no direct references to the bastion model in the Soviet literature, it depends heavily on inference and analysis of trends in what the Soviets are building and how they are deploying.

The introduction of *Delta* class submarines corresponded with the construction of new high endurance surface ships and improved attack and cruise missile submarines. Under Soviet views that war would be short, decisive, and nuclear in the 1950s and 1960s, the fleet was built primarily to carry missiles for the initial strike. After emptying their tubes, ships such as the *Kynda* class cruiser armed with *Shaddock* anti-ship missiles would be left to perish at the hands of Western maritime superiority if victory could not be attained early. In this regard, Khrushchev is known to have once commented that a particular cruiser was designed like a

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<sup>12</sup>Breemer 19.

<sup>13</sup>"Michael MccGwire, "The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy: 1960-74," in *Soviet Naval Policy-Objectives and Constraints*, MccGwire et. al. (New York: Praeger, 1975) 516.

"coffin." The prevalent view during the 1950s and early 1960s was that the surface fleet was dispensable after an initial decisive battle against American carriers. The expansion of the Soviet surface fleet in the early 1970s equipped with greater weapons reload and underway replenishment capability marked a course change towards more sustained operations. This can be seen as evidence that the Navy was building for bastion defense. Units like the Kara class guided missile cruiser and the Victor SSN were capable of protecting SSBN operating areas for extended periods of time.

Current construction trends suggest more of the same. The new aircraft carriers along with continued production of destroyers and frigates and the steady pace of attack and cruise missile submarine construction represent, in part, the Soviet Navy's ongoing effort to shield SSBN bastions. The introduction in 1983 of the *Typhoon* was consistent with the bastion model. The *Typhoon's* size, 25,000 tons submerged displacement and 170 meters length overall, and double-hull design reflects an effort to ensure SSBN survivability in home water, particularly Arctic, bastions. The hull structure has obvious quieting and torpedo countermeasure motivation. It can be reasoned that such a large overall size is an attractive design if the *Typhoon* is meant to float in protected sanctuaries with the missile payload maximized. The decision to stop construction of the *typhoon* is not significant in terms of the applicability of the bastion

model.

Though data on Soviet SSBN operating policy in open sources is very limited, more recent deployment patterns suggests that Soviet naval strategy will be oriented around SSBN bastions in the 1990s. There have been no Yankee patrols off the U.S. coast since early 1989.<sup>14</sup> This trend is expected to continue for three reasons. First, as the Yankee class gets older the Soviets are not likely to opt for increasingly risky deployments off U.S. coasts. A Yankee boat was lost in October 1986 while on patrol east of Bermuda after an explosion in one of its missile compartments. The memory of this accident will certainly be on the minds of strategic planners when considering the option of coastal patrols. The second reason concerns the gap in theater deterrence created by the removal of *Golf* SSBs from the Baltic Fleet. This gap is being filled by units of the Yankee class that have been converted to cruise missiles submarines (SSGN). Lastly, it is one of the goals of New Political Thinking to reduce confrontation and improve relations with the United States. SSBNs and SSGNs off U.S. coasts would be perceived in Washington as a sign that the Soviet military is not serious about adopting a defensive posture.

Deployment patterns of the *Delta* and *Typhoon* classes provide real evidence of a bastion defense orientation.

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<sup>14</sup>Department of the Navy, Office of the Director of Naval Intelligence, *Understanding Soviet Naval Developments 1990*, unpublished.



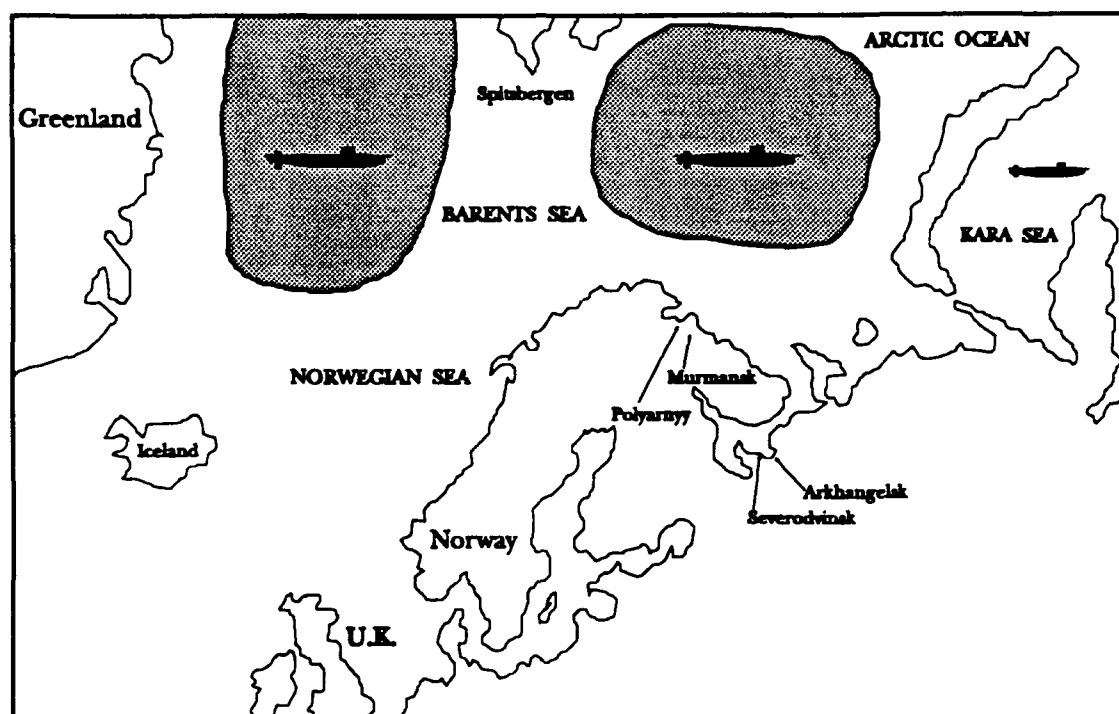
Except for a brief stint from January 1984 to sometime in 1986 when *Deltas* accompanied *Yankees* in patrols off the U.S. East Coast, the Soviets regularly deployed Northern Fleet SSBNs to waters near the Arctic circle (See Figure 6, page 163).<sup>15</sup> As for the Pacific region, SSBN deployments for the period 1986-87 were confined to the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan. Only occasionally were Soviet SSBNs spotted south of the Kurile islands or in the northern Pacific.<sup>16</sup> These trends point to the continued deployment of SSBNs in area close to the Soviet Union under a defensive doctrine.

There are three main reasons for suggesting that the bastion concept will continue as an element of strategy under a defensive doctrine. First, such a deployment policy is consistent with the Soviet continental mindset. Bastions can be thought of as land fortifications at sea where the attacker must traverse great distances; endure harsh, often cold conditions; and then overcome concentrated defenses. The continental influence is expected to remain strong during the current period of reform; now is not the time for innovation to challenge the long-held views of the ground force generals. Secondly, the effectiveness of Western ASW would make the

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<sup>15</sup>The *Delta* class units were apparently forward deployed in response to NATO's decision to deploy Pershing II intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in Western Europe; *Understanding Soviet Naval Deployments*.

<sup>16</sup>David R. Jones, *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual* (Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, 1989) 186.



**Figure 6: Northern Fleet SSBN Bastions**

global deployment of Soviet SSBNs a dangerous course to follow. Any attempt to support SSBN operations outside of home waters would clearly be too expensive. It is more efficient in terms of strategy and, especially, economy to deploy SSBNs in areas sheltered by geography and under the protection of echeloned air and surface assets. The third reason is that SSBN sanctuaries are consistent with the trend towards conventional means in that SSBNs would be withheld from the action as a strategic reserve. This is a rather complicated assumption that merits further analysis.

But first, no discussion of the bastion model is complete without a look at the alternative viewpoint, that bastions as a Western design may prove unfit as a predictor of Soviet

naval strategy in the event that SSBNs are sent to the open oceans. To sail the unexpected is often one of the best counterstrategies. The defense of the West would become more complicated if, in time of war, the Soviets were to disperse their SSBNs throughout the world's oceans. Bastions are a key assumption of the Maritime Strategy. Given that unexpected moves are often the best strategy for an inferior force, the Soviets could complicate Western plans by not doing what is expected of them. In testimony to Congress in 1982, Admiral Harry D. Train, former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command, stated that there exists the possibility that:

...as they [the Soviets] use up the sea space in the northern Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea...they will start to station some of their *Delta* submarines in the South Atlantic.<sup>17</sup>

On the Soviet side, Admiral Chernavin has hinted to the option of deploying outside of close aboard sanctuaries:

The main strike forces of the Navy are the nuclear powered submarine carriers, to which there are no inaccessible areas in the world ocean.<sup>18</sup>

Chernavin also notes on the subject of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI):

American plans to translate the arms race into space, if they materialize, will also change the nature of the activities of the Soviet Navy.<sup>19</sup>

Deploying SSBNs in the open ocean would complicate the

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Ranft and Till 195.

<sup>18</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Navy," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1986), in Ranft and Till 195.

<sup>19</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Navy."

surveillance and targeting aspect of SDI. Bastions permit SDI sensors to dwell on certain areas in an effort to intercept missiles on their flight trajectories. This task would become more complicated if the Soviets were to disperse their SSBNs in the open ocean. It can be surmised from the above comments that there are at least some gains to be made in deploying SSBNs outside of home water bastions. There is not enough evidence to either reject or confirm the applicability of the bastion model.<sup>20</sup> On the whole, a strategic cost/benefit analysis has the Soviets continuing to deploy their SSBNs close to home under the protection of concentrated general purpose forces towards the year 2000.

The fitness of the bastion defense orientation for future strategy hinges on what role the SSBN will play while sitting in its sanctuary. The SSBN force can either play an active role in delivering nuclear strikes or a passive role in bolstering intra-war deterrence. The first option is clearly offensive. To call the active strategic strike mission "defensive" is to accept Soviet logic that preemptive strikes conducted to limit damage to the homeland are part of the traditional "defense of the homeland" mission.<sup>21</sup> For the

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<sup>20</sup>For one of the better critical essays on the bastion concept see Jan S. Breemer, "The Soviet Navy's SSBN Bastions: Evidence, Inference, and Alternative Scenarios," *Royal United Services Institute Journal* 13 March 1985: 18-26.

<sup>21</sup>James J. Tritten, "Strategic Targeting by Soviet SSBNs," Report prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Monterey: U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, May 1988) 9.

strategic strike mission to be non-offensive, but not necessarily defensive, Soviet SSBNs would have to play a passive role as a strategic reserve. Most Western analysts assert that the majority of Soviet SSBNs will be withheld from the initial period of war inside bastions as a "reserve."<sup>22</sup> This approach has been termed a withholding strategy.

Theoretically, withholding SSBNs in strategic reserve serves a dual-purpose: to deter an attack on Soviet territory and, when the time is right, deliver strikes to destroy the opponent's war potential. Clearly, under new doctrinal requirements, the time is not right for the Soviet Navy to develop a true strategic "strike" mission. The withholding strategy is the logical extension of the Soviet desire for the next war to be conventional. The SSBN fleet then becomes more important as an intra-war deterrent. For this task, the survivability of the SSBN fleet must be assured. Hence, the Soviets have shown a propensity to place their SSBNs in well-defended bastions. The withholding strategy is one of the key assumptions of the bastion model. Like the bastion concept, there is no direct evidence in the literature to support a policy of withholding SSBNs from the initial nuclear strike. In addition to deployment patterns close to home, the

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<sup>22</sup>James M. McConnell, "The Soviet Naval Mission Structure: Past, Present, and Future," in *The Soviet and Other Communist Navies: The View From the Mid-1980s*, ed. James L. George (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1986) 47-48; Michael McGwire, "Naval Power and Soviet Global Strategy," *International Security* Spring (1979): 166.

deployment rate of Soviet SSBNs tends to support the assumption that the SSBN fleet will be employed as a reserve.

Soviet SSBN deployment rates stand in sharp contrast to the U.S. approach. While the U.S. Navy maintains a deployment rate of around 60 percent, the Soviets normally put 15-20 percent or about 12 of their SSBNs to sea.<sup>23</sup> It is estimated that 30-40 percent of the Soviet SSBN force is in an alert status on any given day.<sup>24</sup> This means that 20 percent of Soviet SSBNs are intended to either surge in time of crisis or launch their missiles while sitting pierside. The standard logic that is used to support the assumption that the SSBN force will be used as in strategic reserve is that if the Soviets intend to use submarines to launch preemptive strikes during the early stages of war, then they would put more of them to sea. There are, however, other explanations of a low deployment rate that need to be considered.

It stands to reason that by keeping more submarines in port the Navy would be better able to surge them in the initial period of conflict. It takes 10-12 hours to ready a cold nuclear reactor for sea. This option is generally consistent with Chernavin's emphasis on combat readiness. However, another, more plausible, explanation is that the

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<sup>23</sup>Ranft and Till 191; Donald C. Daniel, *Anti-Submarine Warfare and Superpower Strategic Stability* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 102.

<sup>24</sup>Stephen M. Meyer, "Soviet Nuclear Operations," in *Managing Nuclear Operations*, eds. Ashton Carter et. al. (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1987) 494.

Soviets might not be capable of deploying at a higher rate. The harsh climatic conditions make refitting SSBNs a more difficult task for the Soviet Navy than its Western counterparts. Submarine yards at Leningrad, Gorky, Komsomolsk, and Severodvinsk are frozen over for much of the year and, except for the latter, all contend with an absence of dry dock facilities and low water depths.<sup>25</sup> Also, it may be that SSBN operations are limited by the number of men that can be trained to serve aboard them. While every U.S. SSBN has two crews, blue and gold, Soviet SSBNs operate with one. According to former Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze, manpower problems are a definite constraint on Soviet nuclear submarine operations:

...the Soviet Navy did not know how to recruit and maintain the number of crews necessary to keep all of these nuclear power plants going. They have the same problem we do. It is not only a question of quantity of manpower, but also of the quality of manpower needed to keep these things in operation.<sup>26</sup>

In the future, ethnic unrest and the attendant resistance to the military draft will no doubt complicate the Navy's effort to man its SSBNs. While geography and a lack of sufficient personnel will certainly impact Soviet SSBN operating tempo, the decision to defer nuclear strikes stands out as the strongest explanation of a low deployment rate under an

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<sup>25</sup>Ranft and Till 191.

<sup>26</sup>Quoted in *Problems of Sea Power as We Approach the Twenty-First Century*, ed. James L. George (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1978) 91.

updated defensive doctrine.

The primary mission of the Soviet SSBN is now deterrence. The mere existence of the sea-based strike capability can alter the course and outcome of war. In this sense, the Soviet SSBN force would essentially serve as a fleet-in-being. Admiral Gorshkov pointed out the proven value of a fleet-in-being:

History gives us examples of how navies, by their presence or even by virtue of their existence in the possession of one of the belligerents, have had a definite and sometimes very substantial influence on the outcome of an armed struggle...merely by posing a threat to keep the war going.<sup>27</sup>

The influence of a fleet-in-being is a consistent theme in Soviet analysis of the Navy's role in World War II.<sup>28</sup> This study projects that the Soviet SSBN force will become more a fleet-in-being in the 1990s. But a withholding strategy alone is not sufficient reason to conclude that the Navy's strategic strike mission is fit for a defensive strategy. Given the emphasis on unified strategy, the Soviet SSBN fleet-in-being could conceivably provide intra-war deterrence in support of an orchestrated ground force offensive. It is safest to conclude that current trends toward an entrenched bastion defense orientation point towards a non-offensive, primarily

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<sup>27</sup>Quoted in *Soviet Naval Influence: Domestic and Foreign Dimensions*, eds. Michael MccGwire et. al. (New York: Praeger, 1977) 578.

<sup>28</sup>V.I. Achkasov, and N.B. Pavlovich, *Soviet Naval Operations in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), trans. U.S. Naval Institute, 1981.



deterrence-based strategic strike mission.

Charting out from 1991, there are four possible developments that could alter the character of the strategic strike mission and affect the larger course of Soviet naval strategy. A prospective agreement reducing strategic arms stands out as the development with the greatest potential for change. Under a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the size of the Soviet SSBN fleet will drop from its current level of 62 to an estimated 35-40.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that the Soviets are currently placing fewer warheads within each sub-launched missile in anticipation of a 6000 warhead ceiling under START. So in order retain the same deterrent strength, proportionately more submarines will be kept than if they simply were to cut by the originally configured missile. Given a seven year implementation period and if a START agreement is reached within the next two years, the Soviet SSBN fleet of the year 2000 might look like the following: 6 *Typhoons*, 12 *Delta IVs*, 14 *Delta IIIs*, and 4 *Delta IIs*. By comparison, the United States is expected to have 18 *Ohio* class submarines by the year 2000. So the Soviets will still have the world's largest nuclear ballistic missile submarine force after START.

It is unclear at this point what effect a smaller SSBN

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<sup>29</sup>Soviet Military Power 1990 51; Cigar 18; Norman Polmar, personal interview, 23 November 1990. Polmar estimates "around 30" SSBNs after START; These numbers are consistent with Office of Naval Intelligence estimates.

fleet might have on the rest of the Soviet Navy. To be sure, the Soviets themselves are wondering. Admiral F. Gromov, the commander of the Northern Fleet, comments that it is "still premature to say precisely how...an anticipated 50% cut in strategic offensive weapons will affect the combat preparedness of the fleet", but, he adds, "we are already preparing for it."<sup>30</sup> One scenario is that fewer SSBNs would lessen the requirements for bastion defense. This would free up attack submarines and surface ships normally tasked with SSBN operating areas to pursue other missions.<sup>31</sup> However, it is more reasonable to conclude that fewer numbers of SSBNs will make each one more valuable and require the Soviets to dedicate the same number of forces to bastion defense. According to Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, a START agreement "probably will not result in dramatic reductions in the conventional forces protecting SSBNs."<sup>32</sup> Closely related to strategic arms control is the next development, the proportion of missiles on land and sea.

The SSBN force currently accounts for approximately 30 percent of operational strategic nuclear warheads.<sup>33</sup> Submarines are attractive as missile carriers because of their

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<sup>30</sup>F. Gromov, *Krasnaya Zvezda* 22 July 1990: 1, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>31</sup>Pay and Till 174-175.

<sup>32</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks (1990) 15; Floyd D. Kennedy, personal interview, 4 January 1990.

<sup>33</sup>*Soviet Military Power* 1990 53.

concealment and mobility. However, there are drawbacks. One is that SSBNs are vulnerable to conventional attack prior to a nuclear exchange. Also, effective command and control is a challenge, especially under Arctic ice packs. Soviet SSBNs operate without satellite communications. So if land-based missiles can be made more mobile and survivable, then the role of the SSBN fleet would diminish. Perhaps more pertinent is the cost of competing land and sea-based systems. Recalling the third budgetary rule of the road, cost effectiveness is a factor when deciding on alternative means of accomplishing the same mission.<sup>34</sup> Current modernization of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) indicates a trend towards mobility. Two missiles are replacing older systems: the SS-24, a road-mobile and silo-based missile, and the road-mobile SS-25. These two missiles will likely make up two-thirds of the ICBM force in the future.<sup>35</sup> This modernization could reduce the proportion of warheads on SSBNs to 20 percent. Domestic turmoil would seem to suggest to the General Staff that it would be safer to put the missiles out to sea. Though the KGB keeps the keys to missile facilities, separatist movements might attempt to seize nuclear weapons facilities. Also, a nationwide railroad strike, indications of which are apparent at the time of this writing, could threaten the mobility of the SS-24 which has been allocated

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<sup>34</sup>See Chapter Three, pages 33-34.

<sup>35</sup>*Soviet Military Power 1990* 51-52.

some 145,000 kilometers of track. Then again, should things collapse at home, there is always the Red October scenario of the disgruntled SSBN skipper leading his crew to capitalism, a prospect that has no doubt run through the minds of General Staff officers. Either way, the Soviets will surely have to make decisions about the mix of land and sea-based missile systems and those decisions will affect the character of the Soviet Navy's strategic strike mission. The third possible development will be a factor in this decision making.

Modern submarines are becoming more proficient at protecting themselves. For the Soviet SSBN force, there are two ways of doing this: quieting and deep bastions. Should Soviet SSBNs become quieter, then the number of ships and submarines needed to screen them might be reduced. Also, a breakthrough in quieting might even result in a move out of the bastions, although deep bastions provide an easier and less expensive means of ensuring SSBN survivability than quieting and open-ocean deployments. Examples of deep bastions include the Arctic, Kara Sea (See figure 6, page), the Sea of Okhotsk, and generally any area close to naval bases. Under-ice SSBN deployments are becoming more popular with the Soviets:

Within the last several years, the Soviet Navy has increased greatly its interest in the Arctic as an area of military operations, particularly for its SSBNs.<sup>36</sup>

According to Michael McGwire, there has been a shift in SSBN

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<sup>36</sup>Soviet Military Power 1988 48.

deployments from Northern Fleet areas to the Sea of Okhotsk from a 70/30 Northern/Okhotsk mix in 1984 to a 55/45 mix in 1987.<sup>37</sup> Whether or not this is actually the case remains unclear, but based on geography SSBNs would be relatively safer in the Sea of Okhotsk. The area is surrounded by airfields, covered by ice in the winter months, and is naturally shielded by the Kurile Island chain. ASW in areas between the Kurile islands could effectively seal off the Sea of Okhotsk as a deep bastion. These trends could impact the larger course of Soviet naval strategy by truly reducing the need for screening forces enabling them to concentrate more effectively on the second vital mission, perimeter defense.

#### PERIMETER DEFENSE

The second vital mission of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000 is perimeter defense. This mission is becoming increasingly important under a defensive doctrine as new perceptions of Soviet national insecurity, the preponderance of U.S. naval strike forces in the wake of easing tensions on land, present strategists with greater challenges at sea. Perimeter defense is in essence the traditional mission of the Soviet Navy. Since the time of Peter the Great, the security of Russia has been connected to not only its land borders, but

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<sup>37</sup>Michael McGwire, "The Changing Role of the Soviet Navy," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* September 1987: 37; Norman Polmar states that there has been no significant shift in deployments to the Sea of Okhotsk. Norman Polmar, personal interview, 23 November 1990.

its sea borders as well. Securing Russia's maritime flanks has not always been a purely defensive undertaking. Such was the case when the fledgling Russian Navy sailed against Sweden in 1701 to establish itself as a power on the Baltic. The same can be said of the rise of the modern Soviet Navy in "defense of the homeland," a purpose that, while consistent with a general strategic defensive model, involves offensive capabilities. Today, new doctrinal requirements call for the Navy to adopt a purely defensive stance in guarding the approaches to the homeland. But this analysis holds that it is structurally inconceivable that the Soviet Navy will sail into the 1990s with a passive and purely defensive perimeter defense mission. The inherent ambiguity of *oborona* or "defense" is expressed in the dual nature of the perimeter defense mission. Guarding the Soviet maritime perimeter clearly has both offensive and defensive dimensions.

The objectives of the Navy's perimeter defense mission are closely integrated with those of perimeter defense. It is in the paradigm of Gorshkov's classic fleet vs. fleet and fleet vs. shore that strategists on the General Staff are developing plans to both defend territory and SSBN bastions in opposition to a forward U.S. Maritime Strategy. The integration of perimeter and bastion defense missions requires the fleet to simultaneously provide for the long-term preservation of the SSBN force and remain at a high state of readiness in order to, according to Admiral Chernavin,

"immediately repel any aggression."<sup>38</sup>

Trends in the technology of naval warfare have redefined the traditional Soviet conception of perimeter defense. These trends preceded the advent of New Thinking's defensive doctrine and will exert a dominant influence on the character of the Navy's perimeter defense mission. The principal trend of concern to the Soviet strategist is the proliferation of long-range land attack cruise missiles. In discussing the U.S. naval threat, Admiral Chernavin gives the following evaluation of the role of cruise missiles:

The appearance of a new element of the strategic threat from maritime axes in the form of shipborne cruise (including nuclear) missiles has fundamentally changed the role and place of the Navy among other branches of the armed forces.<sup>39</sup>

In the larger perspective, the fundamental change that Chernavin refers to is a change from the original role of the modern Soviet Navy as a primarily offensive and dispensable force starting with Khrushchev and expressed in Gorshkov's battle of the first salvo to the current strategic climate where the Navy is viewed as an indispensable and primarily defensive force. Cruise missiles, namely the Tomahawk that is widely deployed on U.S. ships and submarines, have increased the Navy's defensive responsibilities. Reasoning in the

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<sup>38</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Some Categories of the Art of Naval Warfare in Current Conditions," 31.

<sup>39</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Struggle for the Sea Lines of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2 (1990): 65, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

opposite direction, Chernavin must have also had in mind the addition of cruise missiles to his Navy's arsenal. The influence of technology on Soviet naval strategy is best explained by the *Law of the Unity and Struggle of Opposites*.<sup>40</sup> What is happening with the Navy's perimeter defense mission in the 1990s is a struggle between offensive and defensive measures. This is challenging Soviet strategists to create new methods of defense. Naval strategists are preoccupied with countering U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles and carrier aviation. In some respects, perimeter defense can be termed the anti-Tomahawk land attack cruise missile (anti-TLAM) mission. With respect to this trend, it is of critical importance to understand that the Soviet Navy's focus on an improved defensive posture has not diminished, but provided a new rationale and material base for offensive potential as an enduring structural element of the perimeter defense mission.

In determining the offensive or defensive character of the perimeter defense mission, the central question becomes one of range. To the Soviet, the most effective tactic for defending against strikes from the maritime axes is to strike incoming forces before their weapons launch point. Far from a passive or reactive approach, this requires the Soviets to take the initiative and has definite offensive potential.

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<sup>40</sup>See Chapter One, page 4; See also K. Stalbo, "From the History of the Development of Russian Naval Thought," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 8 (1985): 34.



Recognizing the hi-tech imperatives of defense, Admiral Chernavin challenges prevalent views on how to carry out the perimeter defense mission:

What does defensive mean? Certain people have a simplistic and primitive understanding of this. They think that since we have adopted this doctrine, we should be purely passive, defend ourselves, and, in the event of conflict, retreat deep into our territory. Yet modern warfare - be it on land, sea, or in the air - is, above all, fluid. How can a warship fight if it sits in the trenches? Submarines should find the enemy's vessels and sink them. A surface ship's mission is, if necessary, to inflict missile strikes on the enemy without waiting for him to enter our territorial waters.<sup>41</sup>

Chernavin indicates that passive defense of the maritime flanks is structurally inconceivable. The speed and range of modern weapons dictates that the Navy engage in an active defense of the flanks. Significantly, Chernavin refers to the defensive "doctrine." This is an important distinction in terms of levels of analysis. While doctrine may be defensive, he apparently makes a case for offensive options on the level of strategy. Preemptive strikes against the opponent's forward deployed forces are such an option. The authors of *The Navy* clearly advocate preemptive action in the defense:

...it will be necessary to take effective steps to localize the capabilities [carrier strikes] before the striking force reaches the takeoff line for deck-based aircraft.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "A Higher Level of Vigilance and Readiness is the Order of the Day," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2 (1988): 4, trans. *The Soviet View*, by Captain William H.J. Manthorpe, USN (Ret.) *Proceedings* February 1990: 119.

<sup>42</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 29.

Range then becomes the critical factor if preemptive strikes are to succeed. The effective combat radius of cruise missiles and carrier aviation are a factor that will keep the fleet operating at an extended defensive perimeter in order to preempt action by the opponent's forward deployed forces.

Chernavin states on the subject of ASW:

Cruise missiles now make it possible to make long-range strikes against ships at sea or in bases, or against land targets, beyond the limit of our own ability to detect with our ASW equipment. This necessitates *extending the zone* [emphasis added] for fighting these submarines and organizing ASW support by drawing other forces.<sup>43</sup>

A relationship then exists between the range at which the outer perimeter is set and the character of the perimeter defense mission. There is an important principle at work here: at greater and greater ranges the Soviet conception of active defense assumes more of an offensive potential. The *institutchiki's* conception of the defensive doctrine becomes increasingly irrelevant as the fleet sails further from home waters to launch preemptive strikes. This was one of the conclusions reached at a June 1990 Center for Naval Analyses/Office of Naval Intelligence symposium on the future of the Soviet Navy:

The Navy's traditional desire to strike the enemy at the maximum distance, preferably before reaching aircraft or SLCM launch range, runs counter to the defensive doctrine

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<sup>43</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Combat Support of Naval Forces," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 9 (1987): 20, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

emphasis on operations closer to Soviet territory.<sup>44</sup>

The Navy and new thinkers disagree on the requirements of the perimeter defense mission. The question of range is at the center of this debate. Criticism from the *institutchiki* is apparently based on this relationship between range and offensive potential. For example, in criticizing the Navy for having an offensive strategy, Alexi Arbatov states that one must:

...simply and unconditionally acknowledge that so-called concepts such as 'repelling the enemy aerospace-missile attack'...have become obsolete.<sup>45</sup>

Instead, Arbatov seems to suggest a more passive approach to the perimeter defense mission. He mentions the defense of the Soviet "coast" and SSBNs in "coastal" areas without mention of deploying forces in forward zones. In short, as strategy is refined in the 1990s, the Soviet Navy is likely to meet some resistance from new thinkers, or what is left of them, on its conception of an active defense of the homeland that puts forces far out to sea.

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<sup>44</sup>*The Soviet Navy in the Era of Perestroika*, A Joint Office of Naval Intelligence/Center for Naval Analyses Symposium, 23; Commenting in 1988, Rear Admiral William O. Studeman, then Director of Naval Intelligence, pointed out that "range capabilities" of the cruise missile "could force the Soviets to adjust their correlation of forces for engagement of battle groups farther from the Soviet homeland." Michael R. Gordon, "Soviets Decrease Use of Navy and Curb Overseas Exercises," *The New York Times* 17 July 1988: A13.

<sup>45</sup>A. Arbatov, "How Much Defense is Necessary?" *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* No. 3 (1989): 242, in "Arbatov Strikes Again-Criticism of Specific Naval and Other Military Options," by Scott R. Atkinson, Center for Naval Analyses Soviet Military Press Highlights 2.1 (1989): 46.

In order for a preemptive strike to succeed, the Soviet Navy must operate with an element of surprise. Surprise is currently a topic of great interest in naval art. Admiral Chernavin notes that modern weapons have increased the relevance of the element of surprise. Cryptically, he states that "surprise always facilitates the successful accomplishment of missions."<sup>46</sup> This view correlates well with the renewed emphasis on combat readiness. Along the same lines, the authors of *The Navy* comment:

...the increased importance of the factor of surprise in war is expressed in keeping the maximum number of naval forces in readiness for immediate delivery of strikes and this is realized in practice by navies of the leading naval powers by maintaining large combat ready force groupings deployed in strategically important ocean regions.<sup>47</sup>

These insights into the Soviet military mindset indicate that under certain circumstances it is in the interest of the Navy to launch surprise attacks against the opposing side's naval forces and land facilities. The Navy is maintaining this offensive capability with, most notably, the *Backfire* long-range strike aircraft and the *Oscar* class SSGN. Surprise attacks could also be conducted in the spirit of combined arms to support of a ground force offensive. The interest in the element of surprise is also subject to the dual nature of defense in that the Soviets are gearing up to be able to

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<sup>46</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Prepare Yourself for Modern Warfare," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1989): 7, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

<sup>47</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 29.

detect, absorb, and then react to a surprise attack on their territory. The next logical point of analysis is the configuration of forces in the perimeter defense mission.

The Soviet configuration for perimeter defense can be derived from the literature, hardware, and exercise data, with the latter category becoming increasingly limited in recent years. Different configurations have been tested over the years with different scenarios based on the nature of the threat and have comprised the entire spectrum of naval weapons: surface ships; fighter, strike, and reconnaissance aircraft; mine warfare units; and, above all, attack and cruise missile submarines. Taking full advantage of geography, the Soviets plan to deeply echelon their forces so that as an opponent advances forward he will encounter increasing levels of resistance. The next question concerns the range at which this echeloned defense will begin.

Speaking at a conference in England in 1989, Vice Admiral N. Makarov stated that the defensive perimeter extends 1000km off the Kuriles; 1000km off the Norwegian Coast south to Trondheim; north of the Muscat-Karachi line and east of a line to the west of Crete.<sup>48</sup> It is useful to divide range considerations in terms of the Northwestern and Far Eastern Theater of Military Operations (Soviet designation TVD). This is not to ignore the Mediterranean or Persian Gulf regions, both areas of Soviet naval interest, but just to concentrate

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<sup>48</sup>Pay and Till 176.

on the threat axes that the Soviets consider to be the most critical, based on geography, in terms of perimeter defense. For both the Northwestern and Far Eastern TVDs, a 2000km distance from the Soviet coast seems to be the general rule for the first layer in an echeloned defense. The surveillance zone extends beyond this first line of defense to around 3000km.<sup>49</sup> In the Northern TVD, the 2000km perimeter should be set roughly at the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. (G-I-UK) gap. This was the outer perimeter in one of the last major Soviet naval exercise in the Summer of 1985 that simulated a NATO attack.<sup>50</sup> As for the Pacific, the perimeter would extend off the Kuriles islands into the Northern Pacific and encompass the Sea of Japan. Particular emphasis would be placed on straits at Tsugaru and Tsushima. Chernavin states that Pacific Fleet exercises have been limited to the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk with exercises conducted in the approaches to the Kamchatka peninsula and in the "immediate vicinity of the USSR coastline" in order to reflect a "strictly defensive" orientation.<sup>51</sup> While the Soviets have not operated at extended ranges in the past few years because

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<sup>49</sup>Captain 1st Rank Ye. Nikitin, "The Maritime Component of Offensive Forces: Aircraft Carriers," *Krasnaya zvezda* 19 May 1989: 3, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center. Nikitin writes that U.S. aircraft carriers have an attack radius of 3,300km. This can be used to infer a surveillance perimeter of around 3000km.

<sup>50</sup>Till, "Present and Future Roles of the Soviet Navy," 277.

<sup>51</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "Problems of the Pacific: Restraint Must Be Mutual," *Krasnaya zvezda* 7 December 1988: 3, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

of a combination of economic constraints and a desire to build mutual security, the emphasis on technology and an extended defensive perimeter in the literature indicates that such a configuration will be an element of strategy towards the year 2000.

Soviet naval strategy relies primarily on the capabilities of submarines and aircraft. These forces will be at the forefront in the mission of perimeter defense. Surface ships will likely play a secondary role. Admiral Gorshkov intimated such a priority in his foreword to *The Navy*:

Submarines, aviation, and even coastal missile units now are capable of accomplishing this mission [perimeter defense] in addition to surface combatants and with no less results.<sup>52</sup>

The Northwestern TVD will serve as an example in evaluating the composition of forces in perimeter defense (See Figure 7, page 185).<sup>53</sup> It is projected that the TVD will be divided into zones of sea control and sea denial. The objective in the sea control zone would be to establish dominance in the air, on the surface, and, to a certain degree, under the surface in order to both protect SSBN bastions and prevent strikes on Soviet territory. Surface units along with diesel and nuclear attack submarines would be positioned in this zone. Sea denial is a less ambitious goal. The aim here is

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<sup>52</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 12.

<sup>53</sup>Ranges in figure 7 were determined using a flexible ruler. Measurements were made from the White Sea area so as to reflect the rough distance that Soviet naval forces will have to travel from their bases into the sea control and sea denial zones.





to prevent Western forces from conducting sustained operations or, in essence, prevent them from establishing sea control. An inner surface fleet perimeter would probably be set at 1500km in the vicinity of the Lofotens because beyond this range there would not be sufficient cover from Soviet naval aviation. The Soviets will employ long-range strike aircraft such as the *Backfire* with *Bear-D,F* variants in the lead providing reconnaissance and targeting data. On this note, it bears mentioning that Soviet naval aviation is prospering in the undertow of an upcoming CFE agreement. Large numbers of combat aircraft have been reassigned from the Air Forces in Central Europe to Soviet Naval Aviation, 275 aircraft in 1989 alone.<sup>54</sup> In particular, *Backfire* and *Flogger* regiments have been moved from Hungary and Poland to the area around Leningrad and onto the Kola peninsula.<sup>55</sup> This trend represents an increase in the Navy's offensive strike potential in the perimeter defense mission. Attack and cruise missile submarines will also make up the first line of active defense. *Guerre de course* or 'hit and run' tactics are likely to be the main action of coordinated submarine and aviation operations in the sea denial zone. Wherever possible, the Soviets will try to hit Western forces before their weapons launch point or, if this fails, intercept cruise missiles and

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<sup>54</sup>Soviet Military Power 1990 86.

<sup>55</sup>Mr. Jorg Bronebakk, Counselor of Politico-Military Affairs at the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Washington, personal interview, 21 June 1990.

carrier-based aircraft on their flight past.<sup>56</sup> ASW barriers consisting of SSNs, acoustic sensors, and mines are expected to be positioned across the two zones. This composition of the perimeter defense mission is very similar to the that practiced in the summer of 1985. Towards the year 2000, however, there will be one significant addition, the large-deck aircraft carrier.

The aforementioned role of the aircraft carrier in fleet air defense is part of a larger trend that has the Navy becoming more integrated with the operations of the *Voyska PVO*, the national air defense command, a development that has apparently been accelerated by Admiral Chernavin's emphasis on combined arms. Admiral Brooks noted this trend in his 1990 posture statement: "The Navy is also significantly increasing its role in continental air defense."<sup>57</sup> The concept that is guiding this integration is the dialectical concept of *vzaimodeystviye*, which translates as mutual support, cooperation, coordination, or interworking.<sup>58</sup> The Navy will work more closely with the *Voyska PVO* in defense against cruise missiles and carrier-based aircraft. The Soviet air defense forces operate according to a system of geographic zones, grids, and sectors. The threat axis and force

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<sup>56</sup>Refer to the perception of the U.S. naval threat along the Northern flank in Chapter Four, page 95.

<sup>57</sup>Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 1990, 19.

<sup>58</sup>Floyd D. Kennedy, "Soviet Maritime Aviation, Matrix Management, and the New Soviet Aircraft Carrier," unpublished.

capabilities figure into the distribution of naval forces within this system. Air assets will attempt to drive enemy penetrators into zones where surface assets are lying in wait, towards *Slava* and *Kirov* cruisers and *Kiev* class carriers situated in middle ranges with VSTOL fighters. In the 1990s, the *Kuznetsov*, *Varyag*, and *Ulyanovsk* will strengthen this combined arms effort.

There are two courses that the new carriers could take in the perimeter defense mission: a primarily defensive integration with the *Voyska PVO* or a potentially offensive integration with roving surface battle groups. In the former role, the carrier would sail within range of land-based air so that air defense fighters and *Madcap* AEW aircraft could cycle through for fuel as part of their long-range patrols. Carrier-based fighters would work with the national air defense command to intercept opposing carrier aircraft and engage enemy surface forces in the sea control zone. It is not exactly clear at what range the new carriers would operate if they became fully integrated with the *Voyska PVO*, but such a development would certainly preclude independent and potentially offensive operations at great distances from Soviet territory. An important responsibility that will be assigned to the new carriers in the 1990s is to shoot down cruise missile on their flight path towards Soviet territory.

The employment of the *Kuznetsov* class and follow-on units at the center of a surface battle group can be considered an

offensive development within the perimeter defense mission. With catapults and AEW aircraft, the carriers would increase the capabilities of the Soviets to launch preemptive strikes in the sea denial zone or, possibly, engage in power projection along the maritime flanks.<sup>59</sup>

A final trend in this analysis is national unrest and its potential to change the Navy's perimeter defense mission. For the most part, the Navy's interests are contained within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Except for Odessa and Sevastopol in the Ukraine, all of the Navy's major facilities are located in the RSFSR. Predictions on the effects of unrest in the Russian republic are perilously dependent on tomorrow's headlines and therefore will not be attempted. Baltic sovereignty, on the other hand, presents an interesting case for analysis. Of all of the restive republics, the Baltics will probably be the first to leave the Union. Soviet strategists recognize this fact and are planning accordingly. Naval bases at Leningrad and at Baltiysk near Kaliningrad border the republics on the north and south respectively; so the Navy will not lose any major facilities. Baltic independence will, however, take a chunk out of the Voyska PVO's air defense network and, in the case of Lithuania, jeopardize rail transport to Baltiysk. The

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<sup>59</sup>The authors of *The Navy* refer to "distant barriers" in a section on the use of air-capable ships in combating deck-based aircraft and cruise missiles. V'yunenکو et. al. 236; See Chapter Five, page 125.

concern over air defense recently surfaced in the Soviet literature where one military commentator stated:

It would be more difficult to make antiaircraft defense effective again. Radar stations, missile units, and airfields would have to be moved to the Leningrad area and Byelorussia; this would make it more difficult to detect and knock out targets in the air in time. It would require an increase of 300-350km in the operational range of combat aircraft.<sup>60</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Navy stands to receive increased responsibility for perimeter defense in the Baltic region. The Soviet leadership would like to maintain the Baltic Sea as their lake. Naval presence by way of visible surface ships, submarines (secretly probing the Swedish coast), and especially long-range air patrols are likely to be a part of the Soviet Navy's effort to take up the slack in perimeter defense as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia drift further towards independence.

In summary, the Navy's perimeter defense mission towards the year 2000 will have both offensive and defensive dimensions. This will be despite efforts by new thinkers to get the Navy to develop a more passive approach. Distinctions of offense and defense in this vital mission are fraught with ambiguity depending upon the political circumstances and which radar scope one is hovering over. However, this analysis suggests that there is a principle at work that can be used to assess the character of the perimeter defense mission.

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<sup>60</sup>V. Myasnikov, "Soviet Baltic Fleet Could Survive Lithuanian Independence," *Svenska Dagbladet* (Sweden) 26 July 1990: 3, trans. FBIS-SOV-90-148, 1 August 1990: 52-53.

Roughly, offensive potential increases with the range at which the Soviets intend to wage an active defense. The Soviet Navy's conception of an active and preemptive perimeter defense mission is a direct challenge to the implementation of a defensive doctrine. Clearly, in modern naval warfare of the 1990s, *oborona* at sea has become much more complicated. The fog surrounding defensive and offensive options begins to lift with analysis of the alternative missions of the Soviet Navy.

#### ANTI-SLOC

The battle against Western sea lines of communication can be considered an offensive mission. Gorshkov himself stated that the Navy's mission of threatening NATO sea communications takes on an "offensive character."<sup>61</sup> One need only look back at the German campaigns in both World Wars and U.S. submarine operations against Japan in the Pacific (1941-45) to see that the anti-SLOC mission is incompatible for strategy under a defensive doctrine. Alexi Arbatov, speaking for the *instituchiki*, declares:

Such functions as interdicting Atlantic and Pacific communications are hardly consonant with a defensive strategy, especially where ground troops and air forces dependably ensure defense in the main continental theaters.<sup>62</sup>

Soviet strategists working to retain some type of anti-SLOC

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<sup>61</sup>S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 221.

<sup>62</sup>Alexi Arbatov, "How Much Defense is Sufficient?" *International Affairs* (Moscow) No. 4 (1989): 41.

mission for the 1990s will be doing so in contradiction to new doctrinal requirements that permit neither the character nor the level of forces needed to be able to mount an effective campaign against the SLOCs.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the anti-SLOC mission was a low priority in a strategy that placed primary emphasis on nuclear warfighting. The trend toward conventional means in Soviet military thinking has occasioned a greater interest in limiting NATO's military-economic potential by threatening its sea lines. In this context, the authors of *The Navy* predict that "an increase in their [SLOCs] significance will be maintained in the future as well."<sup>63</sup> In a long war, the SLOCs become increasingly important. This is especially true now that the Warsaw Pact is history and Soviet conventional superiority is being sized by CFE. Besides competition with NATO, the Soviets are also rethinking anti-SLOC because of an increasing threat from cruise missile equipped Third World navies against a backdrop of budding trade relations that are important to domestic economic reform.

To quantify the renewed interest in the SLOCs, an estimated 40 percent of articles on operational-strategic topics in Soviet military professional journals are devoted to the anti-SLOC mission.<sup>64</sup> As early as 1971, sea

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<sup>63</sup>V'yunenکو et. al. 22-23.

<sup>64</sup>Peter Tsouras, "Soviet Naval Strategy," in *The Soviet Naval Threat to Europe*, by Bruce W. Watson and Susan M. Watson (Boulder: Westview, 1989) 25.

communications were receiving more attention. The following appeared in the General Staff's *Military Thought* in response to the notion that the anti-SLOC mission becomes irrelevant in the nuclear age:

Thus, it is believed that the arguments adduced above in support of a reduction in the importance and role of sea lines of communication in a future war may to some extent be relevant only to the first period of a nuclear war...it is felt that combat at sea on ocean lines of communication remains as before an important and highly involved part of a general armed conflict, especially if it grows over into protracted war [emphasis added].<sup>65</sup>

This passage is useful in showing how the anti-SLOC mission had its origins in a protracted nuclear war. Since that time, conventional war scenarios have strengthened this relationship between duration and importance. However, it has not been awarded the revered status of a strategic mission that is able to alter the course and outcome of war. After conducting an intensive study of public statements of the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy and other top military officials between 1980 and 1987, analyst David Hildebrandt concluded that there is no evidence to support the anti-SLOC mission as a "strategic" mission.<sup>66</sup> In the past few years, however, there is evidence that, behind closed doors, the Army generals would

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<sup>65</sup>Captain 1st Rank B. Balev, "Sea and Ocean Communications and the Combat on Them," *Voennaya mysl'* No. 10 (1971): 41-43, trans. Center for Naval Analyses.

<sup>66</sup>David A. Hildebrandt, *The Soviet Trend Towards Conventional Warfare and the Soviet Navy: Still No anti-sloc?* (Monterey: U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 1988) 131.



like to see the Navy develop a stronger anti-SLOC mission.<sup>67</sup> The Navy leadership appears to at least be reconsidering such an option.

In a move reminiscent of the Gorshkov era, Admiral Chernavin is known to be writing a book about the sea lines of communication. The January and February 1990 issues of *Morskoi Sbornik* carried excerpts from this book. It is very significant that Chernavin chose anti-SLOC above other missions and categories of naval art as the topic of his first major academic articles in *Morskoi Sbornik*. Entitled "The Struggle for the Sea Lines of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," these articles provide an insight into the current Soviet naval reconsideration of the anti-sloc mission.

Admiral Chernavin starts off the January article by highlighting the importance of the SLOCs to NATO and stating that military action along them can have a "significant impact on the course and outcome of warfare as a whole."<sup>68</sup> When discussing the course of the war, Chernavin puts the anti-SLOC mission in the context of "long duration factors," a view that correlates with a protracted war scenario. As for lessons of War, World War II, he states that the German strategy

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<sup>67</sup>Floyd D. Kennedy, personal interview, 4 January 1991.

<sup>68</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Struggle for the Sea Lines of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1990): 18-28, trans. JPRS-UMA-90-007, 23 March 1990, 55-64. All subsequent references are taken from this source.

"existed as if in isolation from military operations in the land theaters." This assertion is consistent with Gorshkov's placement of anti-SLOC warfare under the category of fleet vs. shore. One of the more important insights of the January article concerns the degree to which the Soviets might pursue the anti-SLOC mission. The Soviet version of anti-SLOC warfare is different from the Western conception of an almost total denial of resupply. According to Chernavin, the anti-SLOC mission has several variants which depend on the degree of mission accomplishment. Operations range from impeding the transport by a 25-30 percent reduction in shipping [zatrudneniye]; interruption [sryv] to result in a 60-80 percent reduction in transport that will seriously degrade the conduct of land operations; and, ultimately, prevention [nedonushcheniye] to cut off over 80 percent of maritime shipping through a sustained air and sea blockade. These categories are a valuable tool in analyzing the literature and later help to determine Chernavin's conception of how far the fleet should sail against the SLOCs.

In the February article, Admiral Chernavin outlines a modest campaign against the SLOCs. He states:

The [temporary] interruption [sryv] of the concentration, regrouping, and evacuation of enemy forces in a theater may be the goal of special operations on the sea lines of communication and destruction of loaded transport vessels and local security and covering forces in the sea and in the air, and destruction of loading and unloading ports, communication hubs, command and control

facilities, and navigation systems.<sup>69</sup>

Chernavin goes on to describe these efforts as defensive. Such a characterization by the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy is not enough evidence to conclude that anti-SLOC will become less of an alternative in the 1990s. Clear indications of the priority given to anti-SLOC must await the course of the larger defense debate. For now, Chernavin concludes, there is at least a rethinking of the importance of SLOCs to Soviet strategy:

At the present time, views on the role and place of sea lines of communication in modern war are being reviewed. The basis for this is not only that today the possibility of conducting a sufficiently protracted war with both nuclear and conventional weapons is considered to be real but is also based on the experience of local conflicts...In the event a world war is unleashed, the significance of SLOCs to NATO will be increased.<sup>70</sup>

Even if the General Staff wants to pursue a more ambitious anti-SLOC mission, there simply may not be sufficient forces available for the task. Though it can be argued that a harassing anti-SLOC mission would force the U.S. to devote more forces to the open ocean and thereby become a strategic advantage in perimeter defense, in the 1990s the Soviets may not have enough forces to carry out such a campaign. The Soviets intend to almost exclusively use submarines and strike aircraft along the SLOCs. Both Gorshkov

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<sup>69</sup>V.N. Chernavin, "The Struggle for the Sea Lines of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2 (1990): 18-28; trans. JPRS-UMA-90-007, 23 March 1990, 71.

<sup>70</sup>V.N. Chernavin (*Morskoi Sbornik* No. 2) 71.

and Chernavin criticize the Germans for failing to support U-boat operations with aircraft for reconnaissance and action against Allied surface units.<sup>71</sup> While strike aircraft exist in large numbers, the 1995 projected 75 SSNs may not be enough after allocating units for bastion and perimeter defense. According to one Soviet source commenting in 1989, only one out of six submarines are available for strike missions.<sup>72</sup> As economic conditions worsen in the Soviet Union, the Navy will concentrate its limited resources on improving its capability to carry out vital missions. In all likelihood, the military will continue to think, but not build, on improving the Navy's capability to threaten the SLOCs. Practical military as well as political considerations of a defensive doctrine will cause anti-SLOC to remain an alternative mission well into the 1990s.

#### ANTI-SSBN

Soviet naval operations against U.S. SSBNs have become a truly alternative mission in the 1990s. The Soviets began to deemphasize strategic ASW in the late 1960s and early 1970s as

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<sup>71</sup>See V.N. Chernavin, "The Struggle for the Sea Lines of Communication: Lessons of Wars and the Modern Era," 59; "Guarding the Ocean Border," *Tekhnika I Vooruzheniye* No. 7 (1987): 6-9, trans. JPRS-UMA-87-044, 23 November 1987, 21; S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 120; A. Kalinin and G. Morozov, "The Evolution of Ways of Destroying Naval Forces at Basing Points," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 6 (1988): 24-27.

<sup>72</sup>Admiral N. Makarov, TASS 27 July 1989, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center.

it became more and more difficult to locate U.S. SSBNs. The Navy is presently at a distinct disadvantage in trying to mount an effective anti-SSBN mission. The low sound propagation of the *Ohio* class boats makes passive acoustic detection very difficult. Compounding this factor is the U.S. policy of widely dispersed open ocean deployments. The now missionless *Moskva* class helicopter carriers, once tasked with finding *Polaris* SSBNs, is evidence of the low priority ascribed to the anti-SSBN mission. The U.S. SSBN fleet accounts for roughly 45 percent of the nuclear triad and is considered invulnerable to attack. In practice, it is highly unlikely that the Soviets can find even one American strategic submarine. Even so, the Soviet Navy will still be tasked with seeking out and destroying U.S. SSBNs.

The anti-SSBN mission is clearly incompatible with new doctrinal requirements. Closely related to SSBN survivability is the concept of crisis stability: the reluctance of each side to launch strategic nuclear strikes in a crisis when it is clear that the opponent will retain enough missiles to launch a devastating retaliatory blow.<sup>73</sup> As long as each side's strategic systems, SSBNs in this case, operate with a high degree of survivability crisis stability is maintained. Operations against either side's SSBNs are offensive in that they lower the threshold of crisis stability. Far from being

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<sup>73</sup>See Tom Stepanik, *Strategic Antisubmarine Warfare and Naval Strategy* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1987) 1-4.

a defensive task of "repelling an enemy aerospace attack," the Soviet Navy's would be sailing in the face of the defensive doctrine if it were to place more emphasis on the anti-SSBN mission. There are peripheral indications that the Navy is interested in improving its ability to threaten U.S. SSBNs.

Global deployment patterns of U.S. SSBNs preclude the Soviets from employing traditional ASW techniques involving distant patrols by air, surface, and subsurface units.<sup>74</sup> It is inconceivable that the Navy will be able to spare forces from the defensive perimeter to undertake open ocean ASW. A significant number of forces would have to employ peacetime detection, localization, and trailing U.S. SSBNs so that preemptive strikes could be launched in the initial period of war. Besides its questionable effectiveness, this approach is clearly too expensive for the 1990s. Instead, remote nonacoustic means of detection provide the Soviets with the only hope of mounting an effective anti-SSBN mission.

Great hopes are expressed in *The Navy* on a national strategic ASW mission. Terming it the *PLO Strany* or ASW defense of the nation, the authors state that it "may...in the foreseeable future" become a national mission under the combined-arms philosophy. For the *PLO Strany* to become reality, the Soviets would have to pioneer a breakthrough in nonacoustic ASW. It is known that the Soviet Union maintains

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<sup>74</sup>Gorshkov recognized that the nature of U.S. SSBN deployments make countering them a "global" mission. S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* 221.

an extremely well-funded and broad-based nonacoustic ASW research program. Against a tradition of frustration in strategic ASW, the search for a breakthrough in nonacoustic ASW is the principal trend that could alter the Navy's course.

Several methods of nonacoustic detection are currently being explored by U.S. and Soviet scientists. These range from infrared temperature sensors, blue-green lasers, bioluminescent trails, and improved magnetic anomaly detection devices. The most promising area, however, is the detection of surface disturbances from overhead sensors. Submarines create characteristic waves on the ocean surface that can be detected by a satellite. For instance, a sub traveling at 20 knots at a depth of 50 meters creates a hump of 6 centimeters and waves of 2 centimeters that can be measured from space.<sup>75</sup> If the Soviets develop a national strategic ASW mission, satellites will be the centerpiece of detection efforts. There have been oblique claims of progress in this area in the literature.

The most intriguing account came in a January 1988 article in *Morskoi Sbornik*.<sup>76</sup> The author expresses particular interest in the development of satellites along

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<sup>75</sup>Tom Stefanick, "The Nonacoustic Detection of Submarines," *Scientific American* 258.3 (1988): 44-45.

<sup>76</sup>Reserve Captain 1st Rank Ye. Semyonov, "The Operational Robustness of Submarines in the Face of an Air Threat," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 1 (1988): 20-24, trans. Naval Technical Intelligence Center; See also Captain 2nd Rank V. Surnin, "Nonacoustic Means of Detecting Submarines," *Morskoi Sbornik* No. 4 (1990): 69-72.

with other nonacoustic means as having applications for the detection of submerged submarines:

Owing to its [space reconnaissance] global range and effectiveness in action, and to its high output and general applicability, it accomplishes many tasks, including even the detection of submerged submarines.<sup>77</sup>

The discussion of nonacoustic ASW continues with an indication that the Soviets may be making progress in this area:

In the opinion of foreign specialists, in the near future there will be a possibility of hunting down submerged submarines through their track with the help of a satellite altimeter with a resolution capability of 10 centimeters in height; of monitoring the undersea medium employing space laser systems in the blue-green spectrum; and of revealing the thermal scar.<sup>78</sup>

The term "foreign specialists" is a common surrogate in the Soviet literature used to veil important information and keep the Western analyst guessing while still allowing for professional discourse between Soviet researchers. The reference to the "near future" is also significant among other articles on the subject. Of course, the author could be genuinely referring to foreign specialists, in which case the article still indicates a strong interest in satellite ASW.

Realistically, acquisition of a nonacoustic ASW capability will not be part of Soviet naval strategy in the year 2000. Besides the practical-scientific variable, it is not believed that the economy of the Soviet Union can sustain the production of a nonacoustic ASW system with or without it

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<sup>77</sup>Semyonov 23.

<sup>78</sup>Semyonov 23.



being a "national" mission. The only way for the anti-SSBN mission to assume a higher priority in the future is if the Navy can cash in on the hi-tech rewards of *peredyshka* and develop a satellite-based ASW capability. The time frame in which this might occur is on the order of twenty to thirty years.<sup>79</sup> For the foreseeable future, Soviet naval strategy will be oriented primarily around the missions of strategic strike and perimeter defense missions. As brief as the above analysis of the anti-SSBN option is compared to other missions, that is how much emphasis the Soviets are expected to place on it towards the year 2000.

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<sup>79</sup>Admiral Brooks has stated that a Soviet satellite ASW capability is not anticipated for at least twenty years. Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, 14 March 1990, 45; Analyst Theodore M. Neely estimates that it will take thirty years for the Soviets to develop such a capability, roughly the time it took to conceive of, develop, and deploy the uniquely designed titanium hulled Alfa class attack submarine. Theodore M. Neely, personal interview, 16 November 1990.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## Conclusions

In Chapters One and Two, domestic and international factors were discussed as the sailing conditions through which the Soviet Navy must travel in the 1990s. Gorshkov's legacy and Chernavin's strategic vision were addressed as the sailing directions for the fleets in Chapter Three. Chapter Four proved that the Soviets still fear a storm of strikes from the U.S. Navy. In Chapter Five, the new Soviet aircraft carriers were analyzed as the fulfillment of a course change decided upon long ago, but never made, until the 1990s. Finally, Soviet naval missions were projected for the 1990s in Chapter Six based on the emerging trends and enduring traditions that sometimes help, sometimes hinder, the military in its effort to develop an effective, not necessarily defensive, unified strategy for the 1990s. Surprisingly, conclusions can be drawn concerning the Navy's track within the desperately uncertain Soviet future.

On the level of military doctrine, there is agreement among civilian and military officials in the Soviet national security bureaucracy on the need to lessen the military burden on an all but paralyzed economy. The prevailing view on how many weapons are enough has changed since the Great Patriotic War from superiority, to parity, and is currently settled on

sufficiency. Likewise, views on the nature of war have shifted from the post-Stalin reliance on nuclear weapons to first limited and now primarily conventional scenarios. Amidst these trends, the Soviet Navy has undergone cycles of expansion and decline. The new doctrinal requirements of reasonable sufficiency and a defensive doctrine have occasioned a downward trend in this cycle from Gorshkov's global equipping of the fleets to their homeward course and healthy scrapping at the start of the 1990s. Judging the effects of these changes on the course of the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot* demands a long-term perspective. It will take at least ten to fifteen years for the Soviets to sort out matters of strategy and force structure after President Gorbachev and his now not-so-new thinkers finish their Kremlin housecleaning. However, this apparent confusion in Soviet national security policy should not deter those in the West from closely observing and projecting what might be the effects on the Soviet Navy of all that is going on around and inside its realm of responsibility.

The entire system of factors relevant to future Soviet naval strategy were addressed in this study. First, it was determined that economic constraints have yet to diminish the capabilities of the fleets. Through careful management of budgetary reductions, the Navy will sail into the 1990s as a smaller, but more technologically capable force. Secondly, discovery of continuities and discontinuities in strategic

view from the Gorshkov era to Chernavin's command provided important insights into how the Navy will fit into a unified strategy. Chernavin's tenure will bring the Navy into close quarters with other services and raise it to a favored status under new doctrinal requirements as the first line of defense against the perception of a growing U.S. Naval threat. From a stance wary of service pride, this analysis uncovered heightened Soviet concerns over Western superiority at sea in the wake of confidence-building arms control on land. Under these circumstances, the Navy will be maintained at a level of "defense sufficiency." Despite great improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations, a certain degree of mistrust is exists at sea. Even if the Soviet Communist system were to impale itself for good in its current crisis, this study holds that the shark vs. bear competitive strategic relationship will endure in an albeit subdued manner. Though a predominant land power, it is in the interest of the Soviet Union to retain a measure of maritime power. This power will be expressed in a flexible and efficient Soviet naval strategy.

It is projected that the Navy will continue on its course of carrying out the vital missions of strategic strike and perimeter defense, but with a few degrees to either side in response to the dialectical interaction between emerging technological trends and enduring traditions. New doctrinal requirements have intensified the struggle between offense and defense with stress being placed, sometimes to the extreme in

the eyes of military strategists, on the latter. Strategic strike is projected as the primary mission of the Soviet Navy in the 1990s and will assume more of a deterrent character oriented around entrenched SSBN bastions. Defense of the homeland's maritime perimeters has been transformed by the proliferation of Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles on U.S. Navy ships and submarines that, while keeping the Soviets from operating freely on the open ocean, will be used to justify their preferable strategy of launching preemptive strikes from the outermost layer of an echeloned and interdependent network of Navy and Air Defense Forces. The fleets are expected to assume a forward defensive configuration with the potential for offensive operations. It was discovered that the anti-SLOC and anti-SSBN missions, though still alternatives, are the subject of renewed interest in the Soviet literature. On the whole, this analysis concludes that it is structurally inconceivable that the Soviet Navy will transition to an exclusively defensive strategy under a defensive doctrine. As consummate students of history, Soviet strategists realize that it is the offense that is dominant at sea. Therefore, the Soviets will find it in their interest to retain significant offensive naval capabilities.

To conclude with a nautical analogy, the Soviet Navy has the characteristics of a huge warship bearing down on the 1990s. It can change course, but only a few degrees at a time. While we in the West know for sure that the orders to

the helm have changed, it is still uncertain as to which direction the ship will travel. From a distance, course changes become apparent in the wake of the vessel some time after a new course has been ordered, after the rudder has shifted and the bow steadies in a new direction. So for better indications of the course of the *Voyenno-Morskoy Flot* towards the year 2000, we must become wake watchers to determine if, in strategic terms, the ship heads for defensive waters. This study is intended to serve as a guide for observing and measuring the wake of the Soviet Navy towards the year 2000.

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